

WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND AT VILLENEUVE, SWITZERLAND

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

XLVIII

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PREFACE

This volume (September 12, 1931 to January 3, 1932) covers Gandhiji's visit to London to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference. This was for him "a mission of peace" (p. 2) that could end the "turbulence and strife in India" (p. 1). It was only after much hesitation that he had decided to go, for he had seen in the atmosphere in India no sign of a genuine change of heart or willingness to part with power on the part of the British. In less than a week in London Gandhiji began to get impatient with the "hopeless uncertainty" about the Government's intentions (p. 26), and as the weeks passed he discovered that he "had miscalculated the forces arrayed against India and the Congress" (p. 228). Though Gandhiji's mission seemed thus to have been a complete failure in terms of concrete results, he utilized the visit to educate public opinion in England on the conditions in India and tried to win over influential men and women to his dream of a new partnership between Britain and India, based on complete equality and working not only for mutual benefit but for the good of the whole world. On the return journey, Gandhiji met Romain Rolland at Villeneuve and, during a brief halt in Italy, also Mussolini and paid a visit to the Vatican where he was profoundly moved by the "living image . . . of Christ Crucified". "It was not without a wrench", he confessed, "that I could tear myself away from that scene of living tragedy. I saw there at once that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way" (p. 434).

For Gandhiji the Indian struggle possessed a wider, moral significance transcending the issue of mere political freedom. In a message to the world given through *The Evening Standard* as he was approaching the shores of England, Gandhiji asserted: "If India gains her freedom through truth and non-violence, I feel convinced it will be the largest contribution of the age to the peace of the world" (p. 1). In a message to America, he elaborated the theme: ". . . the Indian Conference bears in its consequences not only upon India but upon the whole world. . . . the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and . . . perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world" (pp. 8-9). The means of truth and non-violence adopted by India, Gandhiji claimed, transformed Indian patriotism into internationalism and it was,

therefore, in the interests of the world that India should be able to attain her freedom through these means (pp. 3-4). It was, he asserted in a speech at a meeting of Indian students in London, for the good of the British people themselves that the Conference should succeed. "I have", he said, "known the English nature in its hideous form in the Punjab. . . . It is my purpose by every means at my command to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in preventing the sufferings of my own people", for "people who become brutalized . . . not only drag down themselves but mankind also" (p. 145). Children of the same God and sharers of the same divine essence, "we must", Gandhiji felt, "partake of the sin of every person, whether he belongs to us or to another race" (p. 146).

In the political discussions, Gandhiji's stand was governed by the Congress mandate to him, which reiterated the national demand for complete independence, implying full control over the army, external affairs, finance and fiscal and economic policy, but gave him freedom "to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of India" (p. 17). Gandhiji interpreted the mandate to permit a partnership with Great Britain on terms of complete equality and with freedom to either party to terminate it at will. He, therefore, laid stress on the nature of the new relationship that he wished to see established. He did not want to dissolve the British connection, but to transform it (p. 331). Echoing the eloquence of Edmund Burke's speech on American Conciliation, he asked: "What cannot two nations do—one a handful, but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unequalled . . . and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islamic and Hindu cultures . . .?" (p. 19) This idea of Great Britain and India co-operating as equals for mutual benefit and for the good of the world was a recurrent theme in Gandhiji's speeches throughout the visit.

In regard to the controversial issues which came up for discussion, Gandhiji claimed that the Congress represented "in its essence the dumb, semi-starved millions" in both British India and Indian India, and stated that all other interests "would have to subserve the interests of these dumb millions". Accordingly, he advocated adult suffrage and opposed the demand for statutory protection to special interests, British or Indian, or for special representation of any class interests excepting those of the two great minority communities, the Muslims and the Sikhs. But, recogniz-

ing the special position of the Princes, he adopted a conciliatory attitude towards them, appealing only to their sense of generosity. He complimented them for having agreed to join a Federation, but, as "a man of the people, from the people, and endeavouring to represent the lowest classes of society", he urged "upon them the advisability of finding a place for these also in any scheme that they may evolve. . ." (p. 29).

The idea of adult suffrage sounded too radical in the prevailing climate of opinion at that time, but Gandhiji, "having lived and mixed with the poorest of villagers", had no fear of the masses. On the contrary, he knew "that some of the finest specimens of humanity are to be found amongst these poor people, amongst the very untouchables themselves" (p. 30). Adult suffrage, he said, would satisfy "all the reasonable aspirations" not only of the Muslims, but also of the Depressed Classes and the Christians and of the working classes as well. At the same time, however, to minimize the problems that might be posed by the vast numbers of voters, he proposed a method of indirect election with village-wise electoral colleges, which would permit personal contact between the candidate and the voters. The idea, however, did not find favour at the Conference, not even among the delegates belonging to the minority communities.

The Congress had evolved a scheme of joint-electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims and Sikhs and statutory guarantees for the protection of their religious rights. But it had agreed, in the event of this scheme being rejected, to accept any other solution that might be acceptable to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh delegates. Such an agreement, however, did not materialize at the Conference notwithstanding Gandhiji's efforts at mediation through informal discussions among the delegates. The delegates subsequently agreed to leave the decision to the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. Gandhiji refused to join in the request on the ground that MacDonald would be arbitrating not as an individual but in his capacity as Prime Minister.

On the question of separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, Gandhiji took a firm stand. Any such arrangement, he believed, "would divide the Hindu community into armed camps" (p. 161). While fully appreciating the psychological reasons for Dr. Ambedkar's demand, Gandhiji nevertheless felt that "the great wrong under which he has laboured and perhaps the bitter experiences that he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment" (p. 298). "Will untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity?" he asked, and added, "I would far rather that Hindu-

ism died than that untouchability lived." Saying that separate electorate for the Depressed Classes would "create a division in Hinduism" which he could not tolerate, he uttered the solemn warning, "if I was the only person to resist this thing, I would resist it with my life" (p. 298). And he was to demonstrate later, by undertaking an indefinite fast in Yeravda Jail in September 1932, that he had meant what he said.

Opposing the demand for special representation for Europeans, he reminded them that hitherto they had been the privileged class, enjoying liberal protection from the foreign government (pp. 34-5). He appealed to them "to try once in a while to live on the goodwill of the people" and "make common cause with the masses" (p. 35). He was equally forthright in opposing their demand for protection of their commercial rights through statutory provision against discrimination. "No protection will protect British trade in India if that trade is inimical to Indian interests", he declared. "Every 'interest', British or Indian, will have to pass this acid test: Is it or is it not in the interests of the people?" (pp. 60-1). He would not agree that "the rights of all Indian-born subjects themselves could even be guaranteed as equal", for "the future Government of India would be constantly obliged . . . in order to equalize conditions . . . continually to discriminate in favour of the famishing Indians against those who have been blest by nature or by the Government themselves with riches and other privileges" (p. 315). An undeveloped country like India, he said, would have "to develop her own economics. . .", and "if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of the key industries" and this might mean discrimination not only against European but against Indian capitalists too (p. 321). The speech at the Federal Structure Committee which carried this warning was described as, "openly inspired by Bolshevik ideas" and created "consternation among my friends" (p. 413).

Gandhiji's views about the control of the Army also must have sounded impractical to many. Asserting that the Indian Army was meant wholly for the defence of British interests (p. 305), he said that it should be disbanded if it did not pass fully under Indian control. He hoped, however, that such a necessity would not arise, and that at the time of transferring the control the British would "teach a new lesson" to the Indian and British troops in the Army. "It should be the proud privilege", Gandhiji said, "and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mys-

teries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings whereby we can fly, even as they fly" (p. 307).

The British Government was of course in no mood to meet Gandhiji even half way. There had been a serious economic crisis, and the Labour Government had lost its majority and general elections were ordered while the Conference was in progress. The Conservatives returned to power with a huge majority, though Ramsay MacDonald continued as Prime Minister at the head of a National Government. In the midst of all these changes, no big decisions were possible and the British Government made it appear that progress in constitution-making was held up by the absence of a communal agreement. Gandhiji, it seems, had anticipated this move. Reporting the failure of informal discussion among Hindu representatives and delegates from minority communities, he told the Conference that the causes of failure "were inherent in the composition of the Indian Delegation". They were there by nomination of the Government and lacked representative status. Moreover, their discussions lacked "the sense of reality in that we do not know what it is that we are going to get". The solution to the communal problem, he said "can be the crown of the swaraj constitution, not its foundation, . . . the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom" (p. 116). Outside the Conference, Gandhiji stated his views more bluntly and charged the British Government with having followed the policy of "Divide and Rule". "We will", he said, "continue to remain divided so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the wedge" (p. 185). He invited the Government to declare "that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians agreed or not" and promised that agreement would soon follow. What was offered instead was "simply a share in the power of the bureaucracy to exploit India and this sets up an apple of discord in our midst" (p. 186).

Gandhiji found that one great obstacle to a proper appreciation by the British public of the nationalist demand was its utter ignorance of the conditions in India. From childhood they were brought up, not on truthful, real history, but upon false history so that it was impossible for them to realize "that the sum total of the activities of British administration in India has been harmful rather than beneficial to the nation". Advancing "two infallible tests" to decide this, he asked: "Is it or is it not a fact that India today is the poorest country in the world, . . . ? Is it or is it not a fact that India has been rendered emasculated . . . ?"

(p. 51). In order to realize the ideal of poverty in its fullness, Gandhiji argued, one must not cling even to one's body for "the body has been given to you as a temporary possession" and must be "surrendered at the will of God, and while it is at my disposal, must be used not for dissipation, not for self-indulgence, not for pleasure, but merely for service and service the whole of our waking hours" (p. 54). Addressing a conference of Missionary Societies, Gandhiji explained why he disapproved of the idea of converting people to one's faith. "A man of prayer", he said, "believes that God works in a mysterious way and wants the whole world to possess the truth he himself has seen. He would simply pray for it to be shared. It passes; it takes wing. . . . Religion is like a rose" (p. 121). For him the ideal missionary was C. F. Andrews who lived rather than preached his Christianity (p. 122). While he admitted that missions had done indirect good to the country, he claimed: "I feel I adore the same Father though in a different form. I may not adore him as 'God'. To me that name makes no appeal, but when I think of Him as Rama, He thrills me. . . . There is all the poetry in it" (p. 127). Accepting many symbols for the one Reality and deprecating the reification of man through institutions, he countered a critic with the assertions: "Your God is also mine for I believe in your God, in spite of the fact that you do not believe in mine. . . . man is always good . . . it is only bad institutions that turn him from the straight road" (pp. 386-7).

Commenting on the relationship between art and religion, Gandhiji said: ". . . the fundamental experience in both of them belongs to the domain of man's relationship with God. . . . The central experience of life will for ever remain the relationship which man has to God" (p. 149).

Though politically Gandhiji's mission seemed to have failed, he was not in the least unhappy. He wrote to Vallabhbhai that all his work was done outside the Conference (p. 233). He told a meeting of the Friends of India that, despite chilling difficulties in his work, he was having "perennial joy outside the Conference and the committees" (p. 115). Even the visit to Lancashire, where the workers had reason to bear him a grudge, was a great success from a personal point of view. He was deeply moved by "the manifestation of deep affection that the crowds of people lining the streets . . . spontaneously showed" to him, and said he would "ever treasure that affection as one of the pleasant recollections of my life" (pp. 75-6). Concluding his speech at the Plenary Session of the Conference, Gandhiji said: "I am carrying

(p. 109) Admitting the responsibility of the Indian money-lender also, Gandhiji said: " . . . if we were acting violently, the Indian Bania would deserve to be shot. But then, the British Bania would deserve to be shot a hundred times. . . . I do not know of another instance in history of such an organized exploitation of so unorganized and gentle a race" (p. 187).

Gandhiji's views about machinery seemed to have perplexed even sincere well-wishers of India and he was repeatedly cross-examined on the question. Explaining to Charlie Chaplin the psychological cause for his aversion to machinery, Gandhiji said: "Machinery in the past has made us dependent on England, and the only way we can rid ourselves of the dependence is to boycott all goods made by machinery" (p. 48). He admitted to H. N. Brailsford that it was "only the devoted few who can live the simple life without machinery. The masses will never do without it" (p. 137). "I should have", he said on another occasion, "most delicate machinery to make fine surgical instruments" (p. 385). Speaking to an American correspondent, Gandhiji agreed that he was opposed to machinery, but "only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few", for, as he explained, "whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me" (p. 167). He was not opposed to mass production as such, for the spinning-wheel also was a means of mass production, but mass production in people's own homes, individual production multiplied millions of times. What he held to be wrong was mass production in the sense of "production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery". On the Russian experiment in State-controlled production and distribution, he said, "If it were not based on force, I would dote on it" (p. 166).

At some of the meetings he addressed, Gandhiji put aside politics and spoke about matters nearer his inmost heart, for, as he explained in the speech at Guildhouse Church, though his mission seemed to be political, its roots were spiritual (p. 50). Narrating his progress towards the ideal of voluntary poverty as a means of remaining "absolutely untouched by immorality, by untruth . . .", he confessed that "it was a difficult struggle in the beginning and it was a wrestle with my wife and—as I can vividly recall—with my children also" (p. 51). But "a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up" the things to which he had become accustomed; "a great burden fell off my shoulders", he felt, "I could now walk with ease and do my work also in the service of my fellowmen with great comfort and still greater joy"

with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. . . . All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land" (p. 368). Reverting to the subject in "A Retrospect", he said: "During my stay in East London, I saw the best side of human nature and was able to confirm my intuitive opinion that at bottom there was neither East nor West. . . . This experience has brought me closer to England if such a thing was possible" (p. 433).

During his three-day visit to Switzerland to meet Romain Rolland at Villeneuve, Gandhiji addressed a number of public meetings. Replying to the question "What is Truth?" at one of those meetings, Gandhiji said he had solved it for himself by saying that it was "what the voice within tells one". It was, however, "not proper for everyone to claim to hear the voice of conscience", for "Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility" (p. 406). At another meeting he said: "Real love for man I regard to be utterly impossible without love for God" (p. 412). Paying a tribute to the International Red Cross for its humanitarian work, Gandhiji suggested that it "should cease to think of giving relief after war but of giving relief without war". "Believe me", he said, "there are millions wounded by their own folly" who need the ministrations of "the non-violent societies of tomorrow" (p. 421).

Gandhiji seems to have acquired during this visit to England a deeper understanding of the power of suffering as a means of purification and conversion. Since 1920, he told a meeting at the Quaker Settlement of Woodbrooke in England, "the conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering", for "you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also" (p. 189). In a Christmas talk aboard the ship on the return voyage, Gandhiji argued that to experience peace in the midst of strife, one must destroy one's whole life, crucify oneself, and added: " . . . as the miraculous birth is an eternal event, so is the Cross an eternal event in this stormy life" (p. 439). And so, when on return to India he found that resumption of civil disobedience was inevitable, he wrote to Rabindranath Tagore and asked him to give his best "to the sacrificial fire that is being lighted" (p. 489).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References in footnotes to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to documents and M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1. INTERVIEW TO "THE EVENING STANDARD"[1]

September 12, 1931

It was raining heavily. Gandhi shrugged his shoulders under the rough-spun cloth, and said:

I do not like rain. I have just heard that you have had no summer here this year. I can put up with that if I can bring peace to India.

I want to give a message to the world through the *Evening Standard*:[2]

> If India gains her freedom through truth and non-violence, I feel convinced it will be the largest contribution of the age to the peace of the world.
>
> M. K. GANDHI

What I want is peace for India. I want the people of Britain to help me. I do not want to embarrass the Government, I want to help them. Why do I come here? Because I have given my word of honour to Lord Irwin. No man ever lost anything by keeping his word of honour. I have kept mine. What do I mean by peace? The dictionary will tell you it is the opposite of war. We have had enough turbulence and strife in India. Now we want peace. I have been described as a messenger without a mandate. That is sheer inaccuracy. I have the mandate of the Indian people.

Gandhi then handed me a typewritten sheet and pointed to the last paragraph which reads: "The Congress appoints and authorizes Mahatma Gandhi to represent it."

Is that a mandate? I say it is. Why do I spin, you ask? It is a great exercise in patience. When your wife gets angry, just spin. You ask me if I shall break my vow of silence on Monday.[3] I shall do so if necessary. I am anxious to keep my vow, but if they insist I shall speak.

[1] The interview was given on the boat while Gandhiji was crossing the Channel.

[2] This was a written message.

[3] The Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference was to meet on the 14th, which was a Monday.

Gandhi told me that he would wear his loin-cloth in London, but would protect himself from the weather with shawls and rugs. He would not attend any theatres.

At one time I used to attend the Lyceum. I liked Shakespeare's plays—I adored the incomparable Ellen Terry—I worshipped her, but that was before the advent of melodrama. The only reason I will not attend theatres in London is because I shall not have time.

I am not the dreadful old man I am represented to be. Actually I am a very jolly fellow. I could almost be described as Scotch. I am very careful of my sixpences.

I last stood on the shores of England on August 6, 1914, just after the outbreak of War. Today I return to seek peace.

The Evening Standard, 12-9-1931

2. *SPEECH AT FRIENDS' HOUSE, LONDON*[1]

September 12, 1931

You will not this evening expect me to take up much of your time, or to say much with reference to my mission, but I wish to say one thing in a general way. I am here with my friends on a mission of peace. I am, and my friends are, guests of the great English nation. I hope that by the time we have finished our work, you will not consider that we have in any way abused your hospitality. I hope that, as the days go by, you will understand the scope of the mission on which the Congress has sent me. You will also please know that, as an agent holding a power of attorney from the Congress, I shall have my limitations. I have to conduct myself within the four corners of the mandate that I have received from the Congress. There are some words in that mandate which give to me a little measure of freedom of action, but in all

[1] According to Reuter, Gandhiji arrived in London from Folkstone at 4.10 in the afternoon and though it was raining, the rush of people was so great that police precautions became necessary. He was driven straight to Friends' House at Euston Road. Lawrence Housman, welcoming him on behalf of the reception committee, said: "... Mahatma Gandhi, if I may say so, you are a strange man—to the people of your own country and more so to my people. You are so sincere that you make some of us suspicious. You are so simple that you bewilder some of us. . . ."

respects, in all fundamental respects, I am hidebound.[1] I may not, if I am to be loyal to the trust reposed in me, walk outside the four corners of that mandate.

I venture to feel that Congress stands for a good cause, of which any nation would be proud. The Congress wants freedom unadulterated for the dumb and starving millions. In order that Congress may represent them, the Congress has chosen, as its means of vindicating this freedom, truth and non-violence.

I am fully aware that not all Congressmen have lived up to the means, and I know that we of the Congress shall deserve the curses of the whole world if, in the name of truth and non-violence, we do the contrary. But I derive the greatest consolation from the knowledge that I possess that the best workers of the Congress today represent truth and non-violence in their essence. . . .

We have in our midst, I know, a school of violence also. I know many of these young men—I have lived with them, I have mixed with them, I have talked to them also. I have endeavoured, as several others of my co-workers have endeavoured, to win them from what we hold is an error; but, at the same time, I know that there is a common cause, even between them and ourselves. They are burning to attain the freedom to which India is entitled, which is India's birthright. I repeat what I have told them in public and in private—that their activities embarrass Congress, their activities set back the hands of the clock of progress. The Congressmen who are wedded to this creed realize fully that these young men, who resort to violence for the sake of gaining freedom, do harm not only to themselves but to the country, and most of all to the dumb millions to whom I have referred.

We may be nationalists, we may be ardent patriots, but immediately we apply these means of truth and non-violence, our patriotism becomes internationalism. Our patriotism is so conceived that we want our freedom not to injure the freedom of any other country or of any single individual. We believe not in the law that might is right, or the greatest good of the greatest number, but we believe in the greatest good of all, including the meanest of creatures amongst all God's creation. And if India could vindicate her freedom, attain it through these means, do you not think

[1] Reuter's report, published in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14-9-1931, *The Tribune*, 15-9-1931, and *The Hindustan Times*, 16-9-1931, has here instead: "Gandhiji emphasized that he must conduct himself within the Congress mandate, some words of which left him little freedom, but in all other respects and in all fundamental respects, he was unbound."

that it would be well, not only with India, but with the whole world?[1]

But there is something more. There is the Settlement between the Government of India and the Congress. That is a sacred thing arrived at through the strivings of that noble Englishman, Lord Irwin. I had repeatedly promised him, if it was humanly possible, that I would come to London and, as soon as I felt the way was open, I have dashed to London.

Recommending the study of the Indian question, Mr. Gandhi realized the difficulty, because the British were rightly preoccupied with home affairs but, [he said:]

I wish it were possible for Englishmen and women to realize that the budget will not be honestly balanced, unless the balance between Britain and India is set right.

Concluding Mr. Gandhi asked the audience to work for the fulfilment of his mission, for it would be for the good not only of India but of the world.

The Indian News, 22-9-1931, and *The Tribune*, 15-9-1931

3. *TELEGRAM TO LORD IRWIN*

KINGSLEY HALL, BOW,
LONDON EAST,
[*September 12, 1931*][2]

LORD IRWIN
GARROWBY BUCKTHORPE (YORKS)

GLAD ABLE AFTER ALL TO REPORT ARRIVAL. WOULD LIKE MEET YOU WHENEVER CONVENIENT.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 17906

[1] The foregoing is taken from *The Indian News*. The paragraphs that follow are from *The Tribune*.

[2] Gandhiji must have sent this telegram shortly after he arrived in London.

4. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
September 12, 1931

Mr. Gandhi, in an interview, gave me the essence of the Congress mandate which he will present. It lays down:

1. The Congress goal is complete independence.
2. This means control over the army, external affairs, finance, and economic policy.
3. Scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government.

There were words, he said, which gave him a small measure of freedom of action, but otherwise he was bound to the four corners of the mandate.

Mr. Gandhi also said that, baffling though it was, he would never despair of arriving at some workable solution of the Hindu-Muslim question.[1]

Mr. Gandhi said that he would never despair of arriving at a workable solution. He was always optimistic. He was prepared to go the "whole hog" with the Muslims without the slightest reservation. He would sign a blank paper and leave the Muslims to write in what they considered the truth, and he would then fight for it.

Mr. Gandhi stipulated that any demand by Mohammedans must be on behalf of the whole of them, adding:

I say this purposely because there is a small body—how large I do not know—which is called the Nationalist Muslim Party. I cannot be false to that party.

His business was to bring the two parties of Muslims together.

The Sunday Times, 13-9-1931, and *The Tribune*, 15-9-1931

[1] The foregoing forms part of an interview given to *The Sunday Times*. What follows is part of an interview to Reuter taken from *The Tribune*.

5. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*

LONDON,
September 12, 1931

Mr. Gandhi in an interview at Kingsley Hall[1] today said:

I am willing and anxious to go to Lancashire. I want to visit the North, and most decidedly I want to go to Manchester. I have received letters and cables advising me to go there, and saying that it would be worth while coming to England for that, even if I did not go to the Round Table Conference. It all depends upon the people. If they want me, they simply have to say 'Come'.

I can see there is so much misunderstanding about what we have done with foreign cloth. If I went up there and talked with them I should be cross-examined, and would speak to them without reserve.

Mr. Gandhi said he did not know to what extent the propaganda that had been carried on had found lodgment in the minds of the people of Lancashire, but he would hope to remove any misunderstanding and would leave no stone unturned to do it. If he went, he would be largely guided by Mr. C. F. Andrews, who knows so many working men and women of Lancashire and has been in touch with many mill-owners.

When he was asked for a message for the people of India, he replied:

Tell them they will best help me by observing complete non-violence in thought, word and deed and by following out completely the constructive programme of the Congress.

He spoke tolerantly of the English climate which has been behaving badly today, said that he knew it well in previous years and added that he did not know how it would affect him this time, when his life had to be differently arranged. As compensation for the weather, he had the warmth of his friends here.

Someone asked him if he would go on Monday, his day of silence, to the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee. He said:

I shall place myself in the hands of the Prime Minister and of the Secretary of State for India and will do whatever they say.

[1] An establishment devoted to social service, founded by Muriel Lester in the East End of London and named in memory of her brother. Gandhiji stayed there while in London.

If they do not think it inconvenient that I should be there and remain silent, I will gladly go and follow the proceedings.

The people living near Kingsley Hall are looking forward to meeting Mr. Gandhi, and he says that he certainly hopes to meet them. He said:

Otherwise, why should I be here? I hope they will come here, and I will go to visit some of them in their homes if Miss Lester can arrange for me to go without being seen.

Mr. Shaukat Ali, one of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, said in an interview yesterday that he had had a four-hour interview with Mr. Gandhi on the communal question, and thought as a result the prospects were better. Mr. Gandhi, when asked if he endorsed this, said:

Yes; progress is always made when two people come together for discussion, especially when theirs is a friendship which has existed for as long as ten years. There is always hope, but everything depends upon what happens here. So far as I am concerned there is no difficulty, because I personally would endorse the Muslim claim.

I am going to write to Lord Rothermere and Mr. Winston Churchill asking if they will kindly give me an interview. That is not a joke. I have always asked to see those who opposed me so that I could explain my position. I propose to find out what friends Mr. Churchill and I have in common and I shall try to approach him through his friends.

I have come here bent on peace. God alone can give it, but I do not want to leave anything undone that can bring it about.[1]

"Is there any chance of your going home by way of America?" a representative of a famous American agency hopefully inquired. The visitor said:

No. America does not want me. America is not ready to receive me. By that, of course, I mean my message. My friends warn me, and a voice inside tells that this is so. They might make a fuss of me and invite me to many meetings, but nothing would be done in the end. I speak my message best to America by doing my work in India. At the same time there are many manifestations of great interest from America. I receive hundreds of letters; they may, of course, be merely pretexts to get my autograph, but the interest is certainly there.

The Manchester Guardian, 14-9-1931 and *Boroughs of Poplar & Stepney East London Advertiser*, 19-9-1931

[1] The foregoing has been taken from *The Manchester Guardian*. What follows is from *Boroughs of Poplar & Stepney East London Advertiser*.

6. *BROADCAST TO AMERICA*[1]

September 13, 1931

In my opinion, the Indian Conference bears in its consequences not only upon India but upon the whole world. India is by itself almost a continent. It contains one-fifth of the human race. It represents one of the most ancient civilizations. It has traditions handed down from tens of thousands of years, some of which, to the astonishment of the world, remain intact. No doubt the ravages of time have affected the purity of that civilization, as they have that of many other cultures and many institutions.

If India is to perpetuate the glory of her ancient past, it can do so only when it attains freedom. The reason for the struggle having drawn the attention of the world, I know, does not lie in the fact that we Indians are fighting for our liberty, but in the fact that the means adopted by us for attaining that liberty are unique and, as far as history shows us, have not been adopted by any other people of whom we have any record.

The means adopted are not violence, not bloodshed, not diplomacy as one understands it nowadays, but they are purely and simply truth and non-violence. No wonder that the attention of the world is directed towards this attempt to lead a successful, bloodless revolution. Hitherto, nations have fought in the manner of the brute. They have wreaked vengeance upon those whom they have considered to be their enemies.

We find in searching national anthems adopted by great nations that they contain imprecations upon the so-called enemy. They have vowed destruction and have not hesitated to take the name of God and seek Divine assistance for the destruction of the enemy. We in India have reversed the process. We feel that the law that governs brute creation is not the law that should guide the human race. That law is inconsistent with human dignity.

I, personally, would wait, if need be, for ages rather than seek to attain the freedom of my country through bloody means. I

[1] The broadcast was made on the Columbia Broadcasting Service network from Kingsley Hall. According to Louis Fischer's *Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, before beginning his unprepared address, Gandhiji said: "Do I have to speak into that?" After the address was over, he remarked: "Well that's over." These words also were heard by the listeners.

feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world.

I have, therefore, no hesitation whatsoever in inviting all the great nations of the earth to give their hearty co-operation to India in her mighty struggle. It must be a sight worth contemplating and treasuring that millions of people have given themselves to suffering without retaliation in order that they might vindicate the dignity and honour of the nation.

I have called that suffering a process of self-purification. It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness. I am painfully conscious of our own weaknesses. We represent in India all the principal religions of the earth, and it is a matter of deep humiliation to confess that we are a house divided against itself; that we Hindus and Mussalmans are flying at one another. It is a matter of still deeper humiliation to me that we Hindus regard several millions of our own kith and kin as too degraded even for our touch. I refer to the so-called "untouchables".

These are no small weaknesses in a nation struggling to be free. You will find that, in this struggle through self-purification, we have assigned a foremost [part of our][1] creed to the removal of this curse of untouchability and the attainment of unity amongst all the different classes and communities of India representing the different creeds.

It is along the same lines that we seek to rid our land of the curse of drink. Happily for us, intoxicating drinks and drugs are confined to comparatively a very small number of people, largely factory hands and the like.

Fortunately for us, the drink and drug curse is accepted as a curse. It is not considered to be the fashion for men or women to drink or to take intoxicating drugs. All the same, it is an uphill fight that we are fighting in trying to remove this evil from our midst.

It is a matter of regret, deep regret, for me to have to say that the existing Government has made of this evil a source of very large revenue, amounting to nearly twenty-five crores of rupees. But I am thankful to be able to say that the women of

[1] These words are found in *Entertaining Gandhi* by Muriel Lester.

India have risen to the occasion in combating it by peaceful means, that is, by a fervent appeal to those who are given to the drink habit to give it up, and by an equally fervent appeal to the liquor-dealers. A great impression has been created upon those who are addicted to these two evil habits.

I wish that it were possible for me to say that in this, at least, we were receiving hearty co-operation of the rulers. If we could only have received the co-operation without any legislation, I dare say that we would have achieved this reform and banished intoxicating drink and drugs from our afflicted land.

There is a force which has a constructive effect and which has been put forth by the nation during this struggle. That is the great care for the semi-starved millions scattered throughout the 700,000 villages dotted over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. It is a painful phenomenon that these simple villagers, through no fault of their own, have nearly six months of the year idle upon their hands.

The time was not very long ago when every village was self-sufficient in regard to the two primary human wants: food and clothing. Unfortunately for us, the East India Company, by means I would prefer not to describe, destroyed that supplementary village industry, and the millions of spinners who had become famous through the cunning of their deft fingers for drawing the finest thread, such as has never yet been drawn by any modern machinery. These village spinners found themselves one fine morning with their noble occupation gone. From that day forward India has become progressively poor.

No matter what may be said to the contrary, it is a historical fact that, before the advent of the East India Company, these villagers were not idle, and he who wants may see today that these villagers are idle. It, therefore, required no great effort or learning to know that these villagers must starve if they cannot work for six months in the year.

May I not, then, on behalf of these semi-starved millions, appeal to the conscience of the world to come to the rescue of a people dying for regaining its liberty?

The New York Times, 14-9-1931

7. *SERMON AT KINGSLEY HALL*

September 13, 1931

If we believed in God, he said, it followed that we must pray to Him. Though prayer, it was said, was to the soul what food was to the body, yet prayer was far more important for the soul than food was for the body, because we could at times go without food and the body would feel the better for the fast, but there was no such thing as prayer-fast. He said:

We can over-indulge in food. But we can never over-indulge in prayer.

The News Chronicle, 14-9-1931

8. *MESSAGE TO "THE TIMES"*

[Before *September 14, 1931*]

I want the goodwill of every Englishman and every English-woman in the mission of peace that has brought me to England.

The Times, 14-9-1931

9. *LETTER TO LORD IRWIN*

September 14, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I plunge into work tomorrow. In all I am and shall be doing, you and our talks[1] are and will ever be with me.

Halifax, pp. 316-7

[1] For Gandhi-Irwin talks, held in February-March 1931, *vide* Vol. XLV.

10. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

LONDON,
September 14, 1931

In an exclusive interview to the *Chronicle*, Mahatmaji answered a number of questions today. Asked whether, at the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee on Monday, Lord Sankey announced Government's new scheme for consideration and whether Mahatmaji felt the Congress would be prepared to accept any scheme which fell short of what it had accepted by ratifying the Delhi Pact, Gandhiji answered:

I must not anticipate any scheme that Lord Sankey wishes to bring forward.

Q. Do you believe that, in a scheme of federation composed of divergent systems of government obtainable in British India and in Indian States, it is possible to find a fusion between democracy and absolute autocracy?

A. By mutual give and take I see no difficulty.

Q. Since the subjects of the Indian States are not represented at the R. T. Conference, do you think the Congress can force the Princes to accept a democratic form of government for their States?

A. The Princes are capable of doing many things, but what they will do actually I do not know.

Q. In the absence of the representative of Nationalist Muslims, do you believe it is possible to deliberate upon the Hindu-Muslim question with any measure of success?

A. It will be certainly a difficult task if not almost an impossible one. I cannot, however, help thinking that whoever committed the blunder of preventing Dr. Ansari from being selected as a delegate was responsible for committing a fatal blunder.

Q. In the light of the recent declaration of the National Government, representing the three British Parties, that there shall be no change in the policy on the Indian issue, do you still believe that the external circumstances are such as to warrant a feeling of optimism regarding India attaining Dominion Status on the lines of the Karachi resolution?

A. The question betrays two errors. You think that my hoping against hope depends upon external circumstances, whereas what I said in Bombay and what I have no reason to alter was

that, although there was nothing on the horizon to warrant hope, being a born optimist I hoped against hope. For a hope there can be no reasons. It is a matter of faith in one's cause and means.

The Bombay Chronicle, 15-9-1931

11. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

LONDON,
September 15, 1931

I consider it reactionary. A Bill of this character cannot but be disturbing to those who hope and believe that the Round Table must result in the devolution of power to the people of India.

Therefore I trust the Government on second thoughts will withdraw the Bill and that, in any case, members of the Assembly will resist it.[2]

The Hindu, 16-9-1931

12. SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE[3]

LONDON,
September 15, 1931

LORD CHANCELLOR, YOUR HIGHNESSES AND FRIENDS,

I must confess at the outset that I am not a little embarrassed in having to state before you the position of the Indian National Congress. I would like to say that I have come to London to attend this Committee, as also the Round Table Conference when the proper time comes, absolutely in the spirit of co-operation, and to strive to my utmost to find points of agreement. I would like also to give this assurance to His Majesty's Government that

[1] Gandhiji gave this statement on reading the provisions of the Press Bill. Ostensibly designed to suppress the publication of matter inciting to or encouraging murder or violence, it, in effect, muzzled the Press.

[2] The Bill was passed by the Assembly on October 3, 1931, by 55 votes to 24.

[3] The second session of the Round Table Conference was held between September 7 and December 1, 1931. There were altogether 112 delegates—20 representing the British Government, 23 Indian States and 69 British India. Gandhiji attended the second session as the sole representative of the Congress. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister, was the Chairman of the Conference. The second session did not open with a meeting of the full Conference. The Federal Structure Committee reassembled on September 7, and the Minorities Committee on September 28, followed by a Plenary Session begin-

at no stage is it, or will it be, my desire to embarrass authority and I would like to give the same assurance to my colleagues here, that, however much we may differ about our view-points, I shall not obstruct them in any shape or form. My position, therefore, here depends entirely upon your goodwill, as also the goodwill of His Majesty's Government. If at any time I found that I could not be of any useful service to the Conference, I would not hesitate to withdraw myself from it. I can also say to those who are responsible for the management of this Committee and the Conference that they have only to give a sign and I should have no hesitation in withdrawing.

I am obliged to make these remarks because I know that there are fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress, and it is possible that there are vital differences between my colleagues and myself. There is also a limitation under which I shall be working. I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress. And it might be as well to remind ourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is. You will then extend your sympathy to me, because I know that the burden that rests upon my shoulders is really very great. The Congress is, if I am not mistaken, the oldest political organization we have in India. It has had nearly 50 years of life, during which period it has, without any interruption, held its annual session. It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian inte-

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ning on November 28, 1931. The other Committees of the Conference did not reassemble.

The Federal Structure Committee, over whose deliberations Lord Sankey presided, had the following Heads for discussion:

1. Strength and Composition of the Federal Legislature.
2. Questions connected with the Election of Members of the Federal Legislature.
3. Relations between the two Chambers of the Federal Legislature.
4. Distribution of Financial Resources between the Federation and its Units.
5. The Ministry and its Relations with the Legislature.
6. Distribution of Legislative Powers between the Federal and Provincial Legislatures, and effect in the States of Legislation relating to Federal Subjects.
7. Administrative Relations between the Federal Government, the States and the Provinces.
8. The Federal Court.

The Committee was able to present a report only on Heads 1 to 4 and 8. The Minorities Committee was unable to reach any agreement.

rests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain: Allan Octavius Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsis, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognize as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians—I might say all the religions, sects, creeds—represented upon it more or less fully. The late Badruddin Tyabji identified himself with the Congress. We have had Mussalmans as Presidents of the Congress, and Parsis undoubtedly. I can recall at least one Indian Christian at the present moment, W. C. Bonnerji. Kalicharen Bannerji, than whom I have not had the privilege of knowing a purer Indian, was also thoroughly identified with the Congress. I miss, as I have no doubt all of you miss, the presence in our midst of Mr. K. T. Paul. Although—I do not know, but so far as I know—he never officially belonged to the Congress, he was a nationalist to the full. As you know, the late Maulana Mohammed Ali, whose presence also we miss today, was a President of the Congress, and at present we have four Mussalmans as members of the Working Committee, which consists of 15 members. We have had women as our presidents: Dr. Annie Besant was the first, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu followed; we have her as a member of the Working Committee also. And so, if we have no distinctions of class or creed, we have no distinctions of sex either.

The Congress has, from its very commencement, taken up the cause of the so-called untouchables. There was a time when the Congress had at every annual session as its adjunct the Social Conference, to which the late Ranade dedicated his energies, among his many other activities. Headed by him you will find, in the programme of the Social Conference, reform in connection with the untouchables taking a prominent place. But in 1920, the Congress took a large step and brought in the question of the removal of untouchability as a plank on the political platform, making it an important item of the political programme. Just as the Congress considered Hindu-Muslim unity—thereby meaning unity amongst all the classes—to be indispensable for the attainment of swaraj, so also did the Congress consider the removal of the curse of untouchability as an indispensable condition for the attainment of full freedom. The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains the same today; and so you will see the Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it described itself to be, namely, national in every sense of the term.

If Your Highnesses will permit me to say so, in the very early stages the Congress took up your cause also. Let me remind this Committee that it was the Grand Old Man of India who sponsored the cause of Kashmir and Mysore; and these two great Houses, I venture in all humility to submit, owe not a little to the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji and the Congress. Even up to now the Congress has endeavoured to serve the Princes of India by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs.

I hope, therefore, that this brief introduction that I thought fit to give will serve to enable the Committee, and those who are at all interested in the claims of the Congress, to understand that it has endeavoured to deserve the claim that it has made. It has failed, I know, often to live up to the claim but I venture to submit that, if you were to examine the history of the Congress, you would find that it has more often succeeded, and progressively succeeded than failed. Above all, the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb, semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from what is called British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions; and so you do find now and again apparently a clash between several interests. But, if there is a genuine real clash, I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions. It is, therefore, essentially a peasant organization, and it is becoming so progressively. You will—even the Indian members of the Committee—perhaps be astonished to find that today the Congress, through its organization, the All-India Spinners' Association, is finding work for nearly 50,000 women in nearly 2,000 villages, and these women are possibly 50 per cent Mussalman women. Thousands of them belong to the so-called untouchable class. We have thus, in this constructive manner, penetrated these villages, and effort is being made to cover every one of the 700,000 villages. It is a superhuman task; but if human effort can do so, you will presently find the Congress covering all of these villages and bringing to them the message of the spinning-wheel.

That being the representative character of the Congress, you will not be astonished when I read to you the Congress mandate. I hope that it may not jar upon you. You may consider that the Congress is making a claim which is wholly untenable. Such as it is, I am here to put forth that claim on behalf of the Congress

in the gentlest manner possible, but also in the firmest manner possible. I have come here to prosecute that claim with all the faith and energy that I can command. If you can convince me to the contrary and show that the claim is inimical to the interests of these dumb millions, I shall revise my opinion. I am open to conviction, but even so I should have to ask my principals to consent to that revision before I could usefully act as the agent of the Congress.

At this stage I propose to read to you this mandate so that you can understand clearly the limitations imposed upon me. This was a resolution passed at the Karachi Congress:

> This Congress, having considered the Provisional Settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of *purna* swaraj, meaning complete independence, remains intact. In the event of a way remaining otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any Conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress Delegation will work for this goal; and in particular, so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India, and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right to either party to end the partnership at will: provided, however, that the Congress Delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India.

Then follows the appointment.

I have in the light of this mandate endeavoured, as carefully as I was capable, to study the provisional conclusions arrived at by the several Subcommittees appointed by the Round Table Conference. I have also carefully studied the Prime Minister's statement giving the considered policy of His Majesty's Government. I speak as subject to correction; but, so far as I have been able to understand this document, it falls far short of what is aimed at and claimed by the Congress. True, I have the liberty to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India, but they have all to be consistent with the fundamentals stated in this mandate.

I remind myself at this stage of the terms of what is to me a sacred settlement—the settlement arrived at at Delhi between the Government of India and the Congress. In that Settlement the Congress has accepted the principle of federation, the principle that there should be responsibility at the Centre, and has accepted

also the principle that there should be safeguards in so far as they may be necessary in the interests of India.

There was one phrase used yesterday. I forget by which Delegate, but it struck me very forcibly. He said, "We do not want a mere political constitution." I do not know that he gave that expression the same meaning that it immediately bore to me; but I immediately said to myself, this phrase has given me a good expression. It is true the Congress will not be—and, personally speaking, I myself would never be—satisfied with a mere political constitution, which to read would seem to give India all it can possibly politically desire, but in reality would give her nothing. If we are intent upon complete independence, it is not from any sense of arrogance; it is not because we want to parade before the universe that we have now severed all connection with the British people. Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, you find in this mandate itself that the Congress contemplates a partnership—the Congress contemplates a connection with the British people—but that connection to be such as can exist between two absolute equals. Time was when I prided myself on being, and being called, a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject; I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject. But I have aspired—I still aspire—to be a citizen, not of the Empire, but in a Commonwealth; in a partnership if possible—if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership—but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence you find here that the Congress claims that either party should have the right to sever the connection, to dissolve the partnership. It has got to be necessarily, therefore, of mutual benefit.

May I say—it may be irrelevant to the consideration, but not irrelevant to me—that, as I have said elsewhere, I can quite understand the responsible British statesmen today being wholly engrossed in domestic affairs, in trying to make two ends meet. We could not expect them to do anything less; and I wondered, even as I was sailing towards London, whether we in the Committee at the present moment would not be a drag upon the British Ministers—whether we would not be interlopers. And yet I said to myself: It is possible that we might not be interlopers; it is possible that the British Ministers themselves might consider the proceedings of the Round Table Conference to be of primary importance even in terms of their domestic affairs.

India, yes, can be held by the sword! I do not for one moment doubt the ability of Britain to hold India under subjection through the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Brit-

ain, the economic freedom of Great Britain—an enslaved but rebellious India, or an India an esteemed partner with Britain to share her sorrows to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes? Yes! if need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain—not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world! If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom.

And so I said to myself whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful island, per chance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that India as a valuable partner, not held by force but by the silken cord of love—an India of that character might conceivably be of real assistance to you in balancing your Budget, not for one occasion but for many years. What cannot two nations do—one a handful, but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unequalled, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number to protect the weak—and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islamic and Hindu cultures; if you will, also containing not a small but a very large number of Christian population; and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers almost beneath contempt, but in philanthropy and enterprise almost unequalled and certainly unsurpsassed. We have got all these cultures concentrated in India. And supposing that God fires both Hindus and Mussalmans represented here with a proper spirit, so that they close ranks and come to an honourable understanding—take that nation and this nation together, and I again ask myself and ask you whether, with an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, whether an honourable partnership between these two cannot be mutually beneficial, even in terms of the domestic affairs of this great nation. And so, in that dreamy hope, I have approached the British Isles, and I shall still cherish that dream.

And when I have said this perhaps I have said all; and you will be able to dot the i's and to cross the t's, not expecting me to fill in all the details, and tell you what I mean by control over the Army, what I mean by control over external affairs, finance,

fiscal and economic policy, or even the financial transactions which a friend yesterday considered to be sacrosanct. I do not take that view. If there is a stock-taking between incoming and outgoing partners, their transactions are subject to audit and adjustment; and the Congress will not be guilty of any dishonourable conduct or crime in saying that the nation should understand what it is to take over and what it should not take over. This audit, this scrutiny, is asked for not merely in the interests of India; it is asked for in the interests of both. I am positive that the British people do not want to saddle upon India a single burden which it should not legitimately bear; and I am here to declare, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will never think of repudiating a single claim or a burden that it should justly discharge. If we are to live as an honourable nation worthy of commanding credit from the whole world, we will pay every farthing of legitimate debt with our blood.

I do not think that I should take you any further through the clauses of this mandate and analyse for you the meaning of these clauses as Congressmen give them. If it is God's will that I should continue to take part in these deliberations, as the deliberations proceed, I shall be able to explain the implications of these clauses. As the deliberations proceed, I would have my say in connection with the safeguards also. But I think I have said quite enough in having, with some elaboration and with your generous indulgence, Lord Chancellor, taken the time of this meeting. I had not intended really to take that time, but I felt that I could not possibly do justice to the cause that I have come to expound to you, the Committee, and to the British nation of which we, the Indian Delegates, are at present the guests, if I did not give you out of the whole of my heart my cherished wish even at this time. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India. I cannot do anything more than say that it will be my fervent prayer, during all the days that I live in your midst, that this consummation may be reached.

I thank you, Lord Chancellor, for the courtesy that you have extended to me in not stopping me, although I have taken close upon forty-five minutes. I was not entitled to all that indulgence, and I thank you once more.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 41-7

13. SPEECH AT MEETING OF LABOUR M.P.S[1]

LONDON,
September 16, 1931

Mr. Gandhi addressed the Labour members of the House of Commons this evening. . . .

In his address he stated that he had been sent to this country to adhere to the pledge he had given, that was, to get complete independence as far as India was concerned. This was in the interests of India's villagers, who were being starved as the result of the administration and the taxes they had to pay.

An observation of his struck his trade union hearers as being remarkable. That was when he advocated the doing away of machinery and letting the villagers work with their hands. If anyone asked the villagers why he led them, they would find that it was because they could not express themselves, but that he was expressing their aspirations for them.

Mr. Gandhi said he had come to this country in pursuance of the promise he had made to Lord Irwin to attend the Round Table Conference. He would as soon adopt any other words as "complete independence", if their contents were identical. It was the substance he wanted, not the shadow. He proposed to disregard the ordinary canons of caution he had imposed on himself, and to try to make them understand his feelings, shared by many millions of his countrymen.

He repeated his demands for complete independence, control of the army, and external affairs. In other words, he wanted the identical freedom for India that was enjoyed in Great Britain. Nothing less would satisfy India. He had no authority to enter into any compromise, though, if that one thing were assured them, they would find him entering into many compromises, while, if it was not assured, he would enter into none. He did not want complete independence as a menace to any single race in the world. If he could, he wanted to promote real friendship between Great Britain and India.

He was an open rebel against British rule and power, but thousands of his countrymen were secret rebels because they did not want to suffer the inconvenience of open rebellion. He warned his hearers to disabuse their minds of any delusion to the contrary. If the people wanted to throw off the British yoke and become completely independent, it was because they did not want to starve. Tremendous military power in India was not required for defence from

[1] This was held in the Grand Committee Room in the House of Commons. Mr. Lansbury, M.P., Miss Muriel Lester and J. F. Horaabin, M.P., were among those present.

external aggression. He had been told that, if unfortunately, there was another battle to be fought, it would be different and more intense. He did not need that reminder. They were walking with their backs to the wall, and he wanted those present to save India from those fiery days if they could possibly do so.

Mr. Shinwell said that thousands of Indian labourers working the coal-mines were employed by Indian coal-owners and not British, and he found that the Indian coal-owners were much more reactionary and brutal to their employees than British coal-owners. How did Mr. Gandhi reconcile what he said about British rule with the reactionary outlook of the Indian industrialists?

Mr. Gandhi said that, when he spoke, he was not thinking about these few thousand labourers in the coal-mines or in the factories of Bombay and Calcutta. He held no brief for the landowners or mill-owners.

It was not his case whether or not Indian industrialists were more heartless than British. His case was in connection with the Indians living in villages and not with that kind of oppression. His complaint was about the system by which the last drop of blood was drained from the villagers. The labourers in the coal-mines were oppressed but were not starving, and he was speaking about the people who were actually starving. Eighty-four per cent of the population of India lived in villages which were bled white through the present system, and were compulsorily idle for six months in the year. If British labourers were idle six months without pay, would they not starve, especially if they had also to pay a revenue to the Government?

A Lancashire member then asked Mr. Gandhi on what lines he justified the boycott of Lancashire goods.

Mr. Gandhi said that India ought to be free to use her own cotton-wear to the exclusion entirely of cotton-wear from Lancashire, Japan, or Italy, or any part of the world. It was not directed against the British people. Did they think it was any part of the duty of India to buy cotton piece-goods? His case was restricted to the villages, and the whole scheme of the exclusion of foreign cloth had been conceived in the interests of the villagers.

Were they committing any moral breach if they produced their own cloth in their villages or mills, and used only that cloth? The result was that they were putting sixty crores of rupees directly into the pockets of the poor man. Was there any canon of morality which compelled him to prefer Lancashire cloth in order to sustain Lancashire labourers, who through all these years had been impoverishing them? Lancashire rose on the ruins of the Indian village industry.

Sir Norman Angell asked if the effect of the present Indian protection was not to have Lancashire goods replaced by Bombay and Calcutta, and that the same problem of the six months of idleness in the villages would remain if one developed the industries of Bombay and created an industrialization of India. That point would remain if British power was withdrawn.

Mr. Gandhi replied that his energies were concentrated on the villagers, and that the boycott campaign was being carried on in the interests of the villagers. If they had only their own mills to deal with, they would be able to do so without the slightest difficulty. The mill-owners had come to terms with them not to compete with the village industry. This village industry was a vast industry covering 2,000 villages and supporting 100,000 spinners in those villages. One-third of the piece-goods used were today produced on the hand-looms, though they were working with mill-spun yarn. He wanted hand-spun yarn. He wanted the English to give him British skill to perfect the hand-spinning machine, and they would be glad to know that a British engineer had left with him a simpler pattern of handloom which would give better results, for which he was charging no patent rights, but was making a gift of his invention. This boycott movement was not for the benefit of the mills and, if they tried to crush it they would be crushed.

Mr. Tout, M.P., said that from Mr. Gandhi's reply there was no truth then in the often repeated statement that the boycott was subsidized by the Bombay mill-owners.

Mr. Gandhi said that Bombay mill-owners had given, and given with some generosity, but all the accounts of the movement were open. The boycott movement had also received assistance from the villagers. If they wished to proclaim a boycott of Indian mills, they could do so. He spoke as an expert of the village industry and declared if the mills of Bombay and Calcutta were destroyed by an earthquake, and every foreign country refused to supply cotton, the village industry would within a month be able to supply all their requirements in cotton cloth.

Another Labour member then asked what India would do if other countries refused to buy her jute and her tea. How could we buy tea from India if India did not buy cloth from Lancashire?

Mr. Gandhi replied it was a matter of free will. They did not want to force their goods on an unwilling world. They produced them because there was a demand for them, and if other countries would not buy them, they would have to take up some other industry.

Miss Wilkinson asked if it was not a reactionary policy to refuse to use the inventions of science, and if, by refusing to use the inventions of the human mind, the result would not be to keep India poor.

Mr. Gandhi said he was trying to wean India from all machinery. They had millions of people who could do this work by their hands, and it would be suicidal to have machines that would produce all this cloth with a few thousand workers. He considered it would be immoral for him to do that when he could give these people no other occupation.[1]

The Manchester Guardian, 17-9-1931

[1] After the meeting Gandhiji held his prayers and left for Kingsley Hall.

14. INTERVIEW TO "TEXTILE MERCURY"

LONDON,
September 17, 1931

Mr. Gandhi, before replying to the questions which had been submitted to him beforehand by the Editor of *Textile Mercury*, said he would like to send out a message which he hoped would be sympathetically received and understood by everyone engaged in the Lancashire cotton industry. He declared:

I know that the question is extremely difficult, but with the creation of goodwill between the two countries, I can see no reason for despair. The one indispensable condition is to set one's face resolutely against the vicious propaganda going on today in England to prejudice the Indian cause and to spread all kinds of rumours against the Indian National Congress, which can be demonstrated to the full.

While I am in England, I will consider it a privilege if I can remove all cause for misunderstanding, and with that end in view I am going to Lancashire next week. I go there with the friendliest motives; I would invite all to cross-examine me, and I promise to speak without the slightest mental reservation.

Q. What is the real cause of the decline in Lancashire's cloth trade in India?

A. In my opinion, not one but several causes. The boycott was and is, undoubtedly, one of the causes. The chief cause is the defeat of Lancashire by Japan. It should be remembered that the Indian boycott is not against Lancashire piece-goods, but against all foreign piece-goods, and yet Japan has made tremendous headway as compared to Lancashire. The third cause is universal, namely the declining capacity of the people to buy even the necessaries of life. The fourth is the ever-increasing production of Indian mills, and the fifth and last, is the growing desire of the villagers of India to manufacture cloth in their own homes.

Q. Is there an active campaign to oust Lancashire?

A. Since the Delhi Settlement there is absolutely no campaign, active or otherwise, to oust Lancashire in preference to any other foreign competitor. Preference for indigenous cloth—whether mill-manufactured or homespun—certainly continues.

Q. Are Japanese goods preferred? If so, why?

A. At the present moment there is certainly no preference given to Japanese goods.

Q. Is India's cloth consumption unchanged? If showing a decline, what percentage?

A. I think there is a decline, but imperceptible.

Q. How can Lancashire increase her trade with India? What are the prospects? Is it a question of price, quality, or anti-British campaign?

A. The only way Lancashire can possibly increase her trade with India I pointed out some months ago.[1] Supposing there were a full-hearted settlement with India and supposing India had to buy foreign cloth to supplement indigenous homespun and mill-spun, preference would be given to Lancashire over all other foreign cloth. Of course, the question of quality and price would still have to be considered, but it would have to be a matter of friendly adjustment.

Q. What percentage of her own needs, in textiles, can India supply? How much of this is factory-made, and how much is produced on handlooms?

A. In my opinion India is able, with certain facilities, to manufacture sufficient textiles in her villages—supplemented by indigenous mills—without any difficulty. At the present moment, one-third of India's cloth supply is manufactured on handlooms, one-third in mills, and one-third is imported.

My message to *Textile Mercury* and through it to Lancashire is not to prejudge the whole issue through prejudices, but to study it in all its bearings.

Textile Mercury, 18-9-1931

15. *INTERVIEW TO "THE NEWS CHRONICLE"*

LONDON,
[September 17, 1931][2]

I love the East End, particularly the little urchins in the streets. They give me such friendly greetings. I have seen a tremendous change in social conditions since I was in London forty years ago. The poverty in London is nothing to what it is

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVII, "Lancashire *v.* Japan", pp. 234-5.

[2] The source does not mention the date. But the correspondent said Gandhiji gave him the interview "yesterday". If he was writing on the 18th, the interview probably took place on the 17th.

in India. I go down the streets here and I see outside each house a bottle of milk, and inside the door there is a strip of carpet, perhaps a piano in the sitting room.

In India several millions wear only a loin-cloth. That is why I wear a loin-cloth myself. They call me half-naked. I do it deliberately in order to identify myself with the poorest of the poor in India. What impresses me about London is that there is not the same glaring difference between rich and poor. As I drive down in my car to Bow every night, I have been noticing how gradual is the change from the riches of the West End to the poverty of the East End. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the poor in London have as high a standard of living as the rich in India.

Speaking of the Round Table Conference, Mr. Gandhi said:

I am disturbed about the position. We are making such very slow progress. We have been here five days, and so far what we have accomplished might have been done in four or five hours. The Government is like a Sphinx. It is so cautious in its utterances that it is impossible to know where it stands. We cannot get on until it states its views. We must know how far it is prepared to go. I have spoken gently this week, but I do not know how long I shall be able to bear this hopeless uncertainty, for which I see no just reason. The Government cannot for ever sit on the fence.

The News Chronicle, 19-9-1931

16. SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

LONDON,
September 17, 1931

LORD CHANCELLOR,

It is not without very great hesitation that I take part in this debate on Head 2[1]; and, before I proceed to deal with the several points that are noted down here for discussion, I should like, with your permission, to disburden myself of an oppressive feeling that has been growing on me ever since Monday. I have watched with the greatest attention the discussions that have taken place in this Committee. I have endeavoured to study, as I have not done before, the list of the Delegates; and

[1] Questions connected with the election of members of the Federal Legislature

the first feeling of oppression that has been coming upon me is that we are not the chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing, but we are the chosen ones of the Government. I see, as I study the list and as I know the different parties and groups in India from experience, some very noticeable gaps also; and so I am oppressed with a sense of unreality in connection with our composition. My second reason for feeling a sense of unreality is that these proceedings seem to me to be interminable and to be leading us practically nowhere. If we go on at this rate I do not know that we shall proceed beyond having discussed the various points raised before this Committee threadbare.

I would therefore, first of all, Lord Chancellor, tender my deepest sympathies to you for the very great patience—and, may I add, the unfailing courtesy—with which you are handling us; and I really congratulate you upon the great pains that you are taking over the proceedings of this Committee. I hope that, at the end of your task and of our task, it will be possible for me to tender my congratulations on having enabled us, or even compelled us, to show some tangible result.

May I here lodge a gentle, humble complaint against His Majesty's advisers? Having brought us together from over the seas, and knowing, as I take it they do know, that we are all of us, without exception busy people, as they themselves are, and that we have left our respective posts of duty—having brought us together, is it not possible for them to give us a lead? Can I not, through you, appeal to them to let us know their mind? I should be delighted—and I feel that that would be the proper procedure, if I may venture to say so in your presence—if they would bring forward concrete proposals for taking our opinion. If some such thing was done, I have no doubt that we should be able to come to some conclusions, good or bad, satisfactory or unsatisfactory; but if we simply resolve ourselves into a debating society, each member of which gives an eloquent discourse upon the points severally raised, I do not think that we shall be serving or advancing the purpose for which we have been brought together. It seems to me that it might be profitable, if it is open for you, to appoint a Subcommittee to give you some points for conclusion so that our proceedings may be terminated in fair time.

I have simply ventured to throw out these suggestions for your consideration, and for the consideration of the members. Perhaps you will kindly bring them to the notice of His Majesty's advisers for their consideration. I do want them to guide us and to give us a lead, and to place their own cards on the table. I

want them to say what they would do supposing that we appointed them as the arbiters of our destiny. If they would be good enough to seek our advice and opinion, then we give them our advice and opinion. That would be, in my opinion, really a better thing than this state of hopeless uncertainty and endless delay.

Having said that, I shall venture to offer a few remarks upon Head 2. There I share the difficulty that faced Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. If I understood him rightly, he said that he was embarrassed in that he was called upon to deal with several sub-heads when he did not know what the franchise actually would be. There is that difficulty that stares me in the face in common with him; but there is an additional difficulty that stares me in the face. I placed before the Committee the mandate of the Congress, and I have to discuss every one of the sub-heads in terms of that mandate. Therefore, on certain of these sub-heads, I would have to offer suggestions or my opinion in terms of that mandate; and if the Committee does not know what it is sailing for, naturally the opinion that I may offer would be of really no value to it. The opinion would be of value only in terms of that mandate. My meaning will be clear when I come to examine these sub-heads.

With reference to sub-head (i), whilst my sympathies, broadly speaking, are with Dr. Ambedkar, my reason is wholly with Mr. Gavin Jones and Sir Sultan Ahmed. If we were a homogeneous Committee whose members were entitled to vote and come to a conclusion, I should then sail a very large distance with Dr. Ambedkar; but such is not our position. We are an ill-assorted group, each member of which is independent of the other and therefore entitled to give his or her views unfettered by any common rule. Hence, we have no right, in my humble opinion, to say to the States what they shall do and what they shall not do. Those States have very generously come to our assistance and said that they would federate with us, and perhaps part with some of their rights which they might otherwise have held exclusively. That being so, I could not but endorse the opinion given by Sir Sultan Ahmed, which was perhaps emphasized by Mr. Gavin Jones, that the utmost that we can do is to plead with the States, and show them our own difficulties. At the same time I feel that we have to recognize their special difficulties also. Therefore, I can only venture a suggestion or two to the great Princes for their sympathetic consideration; and I would urge this, being a man of the people, from the people, and endeavouring to represent the lowest classes of society—I would urge upon them the advisability of finding a place for these also in any scheme that they may evolve

and present for the acceptance of this Committee. I feel, and I know, that they have the interests of their ryots at heart. I know that they claim jealously to guard their interests; but they will, if all goes well, more and more come in contact with popular India, if I may so call British India; and they will want to make common cause with the inhabitants of that India, as the inhabitants of that India would want to make common cause with the Princes' India. After all, there is no vital, real division between these two Indias. If one can divide a living body into two parts, you may divide India into two parts. It has lived as one country from time immemorial, and no artificial boundary can possibly divide it. The Princes, be it said to their credit, when they declared themselves frankly and courageously in favour of federation, claimed also to be of the same blood with us—claimed to be our own kith and kin. How could they do otherwise? There is no difference between them and us except that we are common people and they are—God has made them—noblemen, Princes. I wish them well, I wish them all prosperity; and I also pray that their prosperity and their welfare may be utilized for the advancement of their own dear people, their own subjects. Beyond this I will not go; I cannot go. I can only make an appeal to them. It is open to them, as we know, either to come into the Federation or not to come into it. It is up to us to make it easy for them to come into the Federation. It is up to them to make it easy for us to welcome them with open arms. Without that spirit of give-and-take, I know that we shall not be able to come to any definite scheme of federation; or, if we do, we shall ultimately quarrel and break up. Therefore, I would rather that we did not embark upon any federal scheme, than that we should do so without our full hearts in the thing. If we do so, we should do so whole-heartedly.

Then, with reference to the second head, I see that the second head has really been considered in connection with disqualifications—whether there should be any disqualifications or not. Although I claim to be a full-fledged democrat, I have no hesitation in saying that it is entirely consistent with the rights of the voter to have some disqualifications attaching to candidature as also some disqualifications which would unseat a member. What they should be I do not wish to go into at the present moment; I simply say that I would endorse whole-heartedly the idea and the principle of disqualification. The words "moral turpitude" do not frighten me; on the contrary I think it is a good expression. Of course, any words that we may choose with the greatest delibera-

tion will still cause difficulties; but what are judges for if they are not there to surmount them? In case of difficulty, judges will come to our assistance and will say what comes under the term "moral turpitude" and what does not; and if, perchance, a person like myself, offering civil resistance, was considered guilty of "moral turpitude", I should not mind. It may be that some people may have to suffer hardship, but on that account I am not disposed to say that there shall be no disqualifications whatsoever, and that, if there were any, it would be an encroachment upon the right of the voter. If we are to have some test or some age limit, I think we should have some character limit as well.

Then the third point is as to indirect and direct election. I wish Lord Peel were here to find me in substantial agreement with him so far as the principle of indirect election is concerned. I do not know—I am talking simply as a layman—but the words "indirect election" do not frighten me. I do not know if they have any technical meaning; if they have, I am wholly unaware of it. I am presently going to say what I mean. Whether it is called "direct election" or "indirect election", I would certainly go round and plead for it, and probably get a large body of public opinion in favour of that method of election. The method I am about to suggest is necessary because I am wedded to adult suffrage. Somehow or other, Congressmen swear by it. Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one; and one of the decisive reasons to me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Mussalmans, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all classes. I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got wealth should have the vote, but that a man who has got character, but no wealth or literacy, should have no vote; or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote for the crime of being a poor man. It is an unbearable thing; and having lived and mixed with the poorest of the villagers, and having prided myself on being considered an untouchable, I know that some of the finest specimens of humanity are to be found amongst these poorer people, amongst the very untouchables themselves. I would far rather forgo the right of voting myself than that this untouchable brother should not have the vote. I am not enamoured of the doctrine of literacy that a voter must at least have a knowledge of the three R's. I want for my people a knowledge of the three R's; but I know also that, if I have to wait until they have got a knowledge of the three R's before they can

be qualified for voting, I shall have to wait until the Greek Kalends, and I am not prepared to wait all that time. I know millions of these men are quite capable of voting; but if we are going to give them all the vote, it will become very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to bring them all on the voters' list and have manageable constituencies.

I do share Lord Peel's fear that, if we have unwieldy constituencies, it is not possible for the candidate to come in personal touch with all this multitude of people or to keep touch with them from time to time and to take their opinion and so on. Although I have never aspired to legislative honours, I have had something to do with these electorates and I know how difficult it has been. I also know the experiences of those who have been members of these legislative bodies. We in the Congress, therefore, have evolved a scheme, and though the Government of the day have accused us of insolently setting up a parallel government, I would like to subscribe to that charge in my own fashion. Though we have not set up any parallel government, we certainly aspire some day or other to displace the existing Government and, in due course, in the course of evolution, to take charge also of that Government.

Having been for the last fourteen years a draftsman of the Indian National Congress, and having been for nearly twenty years draftsman for a similar body[1] in South Africa, you will allow me to share my experience with you. In the Congress constitution we have practically adult suffrage. We impose a nominal fee of four annas a year. I would not mind imposing that fee even now. I again share Lord Peel's fear that, in our poor country, we run the risk of having to spend a lot of money merely upon managing our elections. I would avoid that, and therefore I would even collect this money. I am open to conviction that even four annas would be a grave burden, in which case I would waive it; but in any case in the Congress organization we have that.

We have also another distinguishing feature. So far as I know the working of voting systems, the registration officer has to put on the voters' list all those who he considers are entitled to the vote; and hence, whether a man wishes to vote or not—whether he wants his name to come on the list or not—he finds his name there. One fine morning I found my name on the voters' list in Durban in Natal. I had no intention of affecting the

[1] The Natal Indian Congress, and later the Transvaal British Indian Association

legislative position there and I never cared to place my name on the roll of voters; but when some candidate wanted my vote for himself, he drew my attention to the fact that I was on the voters' list; and since then, I have known that is how voters' lists are prepared. We have this alternative that he who wants the vote can have it. It is therefore open to those who want the vote, subject to the condition regarding age and any other condition which all can fulfil, to have their names, without distinction of sex, on the voters' list. I think a scheme of that character would keep the voters' list within a manageable compass.

Even so we would have millions, and something is needed to link the village with the Central Legislature. We have something analogous to the Central Legislature in the Indian Congress Committee. We have also provincial bodies analogous to the Provincial Legislatures, and we have also our own tin-pot legislation and we have also our administration. We have got our own executive. It is perfectly true we have no bayonets to back it, but we have something infinitely superior to back our decisions and to get our people to conform to those decisions, and we have hitherto not found insurmountable difficulties. I do not say that we have been able always to exact obedience fully in all circumstances; but we have been able to scrape through all these forty-seven years, and year after year this Congress has grown from height to height. Let me tell you that our provincial councils have got full authority to frame bye-laws in order to govern their elections. The corner-stone, namely the qualifications for voters, they cannot change at all; but all other things they can have in their own way. Therefore, I will take only one Province where this thing is done. There the villages elect their own little committees. These committees elect the taluka committees (taluka is a sub-district), and these taluka committees again elect the district councils, and the district councils elect provincial councils. The provincial councils send their members to the central legislature—if one may so dub this All-India Congress Committee. That is how we have been able to do it. If here we do some such thing, I do not mind. But take another way. We must remember that we have 700,000 villages. I believe that the 700,000 includes the Princes' India also. I speak subject to correction. We have perhaps 500,000 or a little more in popular India. We may have these 500,000 units. Each unit would elect its own representative, and these representatives would be the electorate that would elect, if you will, representatives to the Central or the Federal Legislature. I have simply given you an outline of the scheme. It can be filled

in if it commends itself to your attention. If we are going to have adult suffrage, I am afraid that we shall have to fall back upon a scheme somewhat after the style that I have suggested to you. Wherever it has been working, I can only give you my evidence that it has worked with excellent results, and there has been no difficulty in establishing contact through these respective representatives with the humblest villager. The machinery has worked smoothly; and, where people have worked it honestly, it has worked expeditiously, and certainly without any expense worth naming. Under this scheme I cannot conceive the possibility of a candidate having to spend Rs. 60,000 over an election, or even one lakh. I know of some cases in which the expenses have run to one lakh of rupees—in my opinion, an atrocious figure for the poorest country in the world.

Whilst I am upon this, I would like to give you my opinion, for what it may be worth, in connection with bicameral Legislatures. I find myself, if it would not offend your susceptibilities, in Mr. Joshi's company. I am certainly not enamoured of and I do not swear by two Houses of Legislature. I have no fear of a popular Legislature running away with itself and hastily passing some laws of which afterwards it will have to repent. I would not like to give a bad name to, and then hang the popular Legislature. I think that a popular Legislature can take care of itself; and, since I am now thinking of the poorest country in the world, the less expenses we have to bear the better it is for us. I do not for one moment endorse the idea that, unless we have an Upper Chamber to exercise some control over the popular Chamber, the popular Chamber will ruin the country. I have no such fear; but I can visualize a state of affairs when there can be a battle royal between a popular Chamber and an Upper Chamber. Anyway, whilst I would not take up a decisive attitude in connection with it, personally I am firmly of opinion that we can do with one Chamber only and that we can do with it to great advantage. We will certainly save a great deal of expense if we can bring ourselves to believe that we shall do with one Chamber. I find myself in agreement whole-heartedly with Lord Peel that we need not worry ourselves about precedents. We shall set a new precedent ourselves. After all we are a continent. There is no such thing as absolute similarity between any two human living institutions. We have our own peculiar circumstances, and we have our idiosyncrasies. I do feel that we shall have in many ways to strike out a new path for ourselves irrespective of precedents. Therefore, I feel that we would not go wrong if we

tried the method of having one Chamber only. Make it as perfect as human ingenuity can, by all means; but be satisfied with only one Chamber. Holding these views, I do not need to say more about sub-heads (iii) and (iv).[1]

I come to sub-head (v)—representation by special constituencies of special interests. I here speak for the Congress. The Congress has reconciled itself to special treatment of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh tangle. There are sound historical reasons for it, but the Congress will not extend that doctrine in any shape or form. I listened to the list of special interests. So far as the untouchables are concerned, I have not yet quite grasped what Dr. Ambedkar has to say; but, of course, the Congress will share the honour with Dr. Ambedkar of representing the interests of the untouchables. They are as dear to the Congress as the interests of any other body or of any other individual throughout the length and breadth of India. Therefore, I would most strongly resist any further special representation. Under adult suffrage, certainly, labour units, and so on, do not require any special representation; landlords most decidedly not, and I will give you my reason. There is no desire on the part of the Congress, and there is no desire on the part of these dumb paupers, to dispossess landlords of their possessions; but they would have landlords to act as trustees for their tenants. I think that it should be a matter of pride for the landlords to feel that their ryots, these millions of villagers, would prefer them as their candidates and as their representatives than others coming from other parts or someone from among themselves. Therefore, what will happen is that the landlords will have to make common cause with the ryots; and what can be nobler, what can be better, than that they should do so? But, if the landlords insisted on special treatment and special representation in either Chamber, if there are two Chambers, or in the one popular Chamber, I am afraid that they would be really throwing the apple of discord into our midst; and I am hoping that no such claim will be put forward on behalf of the landlords or any such interest.

Then I come to my friends the Europeans, whom naturally Mr. Gavin Jones claims to represent. But I would suggest to him humbly that hitherto they have been the privileged class—they have received the protection that this foreign Government could

[1] Sub-head (iii) concerned relations between the two Chambers of the Federal Legislature and sub-head (iv) distribution of financial resources between the Federation and its units.

give, and they have received it liberally. If they would now make common cause with the masses of India, they would not be afraid, as Mr. Gavin Jones said he was afraid. He read from some document: I have not read it. It may be that some Indians also may say, "Oh yes, if Europeans, Englishmen, want to be elected by us, we are not going to elect them;" but I would undertake to take Mr. Gavin Jones throughout the length and breadth of India and show to him that he will be preferred to an Indian if he will make common cause with us. Take Charlie Andrews. I assure you that he will be elected a delegate in any constituency in India without the slightest difficulty. Ask him whether he has not been received throughout the length and breadth of India with open arms. I could multiply those instances. I have appealed to the Europeans to try once in a while to live on the goodwill of the people, and not seek to have their interests specially safeguarded or protected. If I might venture a suggestion, safeguards would be the wrong way to go about the business. Let them live in India as one of us—that is how I would want them to live, and how I would beseech them to live. In any case, I do feel that, in any scheme that the Congress can be party to, there is no room for the protection of special interests. The special interests are automatically protected when you have got adult suffrage.

So far as the Christians are concerned, if I may cite the testimony of one who is no longer with us, I know that he said: "We want no special protection." And I have letters from Christian organizations saying that they want no special protection, that the special protection that they would get would be by right of humble service.

Then, are any special qualifications to be laid down for eligibility for membership of the Upper House? As you know my opinion about the Upper House, I do not need to give any opinion about that.

Now I come to a very delicate point—that is, the Oath of Allegiance. I would not be able to give any opinion just now, because I want to know what the status is to be. If it is to be complete freedom, if it is to be complete independence for India, the Oath of Allegiance naturally will be of one character. If it is to be a subject India, then I have no place there. Therefore, it is not possible for me today to give any opinion upon the question of the Oath of Allegiance.

Then the last question: what provision, if any, shall be made in each Chamber for nominated members? Well, in the

scheme that the Congressmen have adumbrated there is no room for nominated members. I can understand experts coming, or men whose advice might be sought. They would give their advice and they would retire. I cannot see the slightest justification for clothing them with votes. Votes are given only by popular representatives if we want to have a democratic institution undiluted. Therefore, I cannot possibly endorse a scheme where there are nominated members.

But that brings me back to sub-head (v). We have provision in the Congress regarding special cases. We want women to be elected, we want Europeans to be elected, we certainly want untouchables to be elected, we want Christians to be elected; and I know well enough that these are very large minorities. Now, supposing that the constituencies so misbehave themselves as not to elect women or Europeans or untouchables or, say, landlords, and they do not do so for no reasonable justification whatsoever, I would have a clause in the constitution which wonld enable this elected Legislature to elect those who should have been elected, but have not been elected. Perhaps I have not been able to express my meaning clearly, so I will give you an illustration. We have in one provincial Congress council exactly a rule of this character. We have thrown the burden upon the constituencies of electing so many women, so many Mussalmans and so many untouchables to the council; and, if they fail to do so, the election is then conducted by this elected body. They elect those who have been unjustly left out by the electorate. I would welcome some such saving clause in order that constituencies may not misbehave themselves; but, in the first instance, I would trust the constituencies to elect all classes of people and not become clannish or be caste-ridden. The Congress mentality, I may assure you, is wholly and absolutely against caste and against the doctrine of superiority and inferiority. Congress is cultivating a spirit of absolute equality.

I am sorry for having taken so much of your time, but I am thankful to you for having given me this indulgence, Lord Sankey.[1]

SIR SULTAN AHMED: I have a question I want to put to Mr. Gandhi, if you will permit me to do so. He suggested that, if the requisite number of people for any particular community were not elected, then he would have the power of election given to some other body.

[1] At this point Lord Sankey left the chair, which was taken by Lord Lothian

MR. GANDHI: No, it is those people who are elected who will elect.

MR. IYENGAR: Co-option.

MR. GANDHI: Call it co-option. As a layman, you would not expect me to use accurate language, please.

SIR SULTAN AHMED: But does that not imply that there will be reservation of seats for communities?

MR. GANDHI: It need not. As I say, there can be a clause of that kind, without specifying the number; but I do not mind even the numbers being specified. And you will please remember that that did not refer to the Mussalmans at all.

SIR SULTAN AHMED: No, I am not talking about Mussalmans at all; I am talking about those four classes whom you mentioned: Commerce, Labour, Landlords, and so on. It is nothing to do with Mussalmans at all; they do not come into it.

MRS. SUBBARAYAN: May I also respectfully ask Mahatma Gandhi a question? You referred to the position of women. Suppose the Central Legislature does not have any women on it, then you will have a clause to allow that Legislature to co-opt women?

MR. GANDHI: I would boycott that Legislature. A Legislature that will not elect a proper share of women will be boycotted by me, and I speak for the Congress also. There would certainly be full protection. How it can be brought about is incredibly simple; but I would be no party to a setting up of special constituencies.

MRS. SUBBARAYAN: Not special constituencies; but supposing women do not come in by general election, then you will allow the Central Legislature to elect some women?

MR. GANDHI: Then they have got to enjoy the honour of being elected by the elected legislators, before they can conduct their proceedings.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: May I ask one question? With regard to the 500,000 villages or electorates, would they elect first to the Provincial Councils and then the Provincial Councils elect to the Federal Legislature; or would you have separate electorates for the Provincial Council and the Federal Legislature?

MR. GANDHI: May I suggest, Sir, in the first instance, in answer to Sir Akbar Hydari, that if you accept the general outline of the scheme that I have adumbrated, all these things

can really be settled without the slightest difficulty; but the special question that Sir Akbar has asked I will answer by saying that the villages will be electing candidates to no legislature in the scheme that I was trying to propound, but they will elect the electors, the voters—the villagers will elect one man, and say, "You will exercise the vote for us." He will become their agent for the election either to the Provincial Legislature or to the Central Legislature.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: Then that man would have a dual capacity, either to elect a man to the Provincial Council or to the Central Legislature?

MR. GANDHI. He can have that; but today, to be relevant, I was talking simply of the election to the Central Legislature. I would certainly apply the same scheme to the Provincial Legislature.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: Would you rule out any idea of the Provincial Legislature so elected electing to the Federal Legislature?

MR. GANDHI. I do not rule it out, but that does not commend itself to me. If that is the special meaning of "indirect election", I rule it out. Therefore, I use the term "indirect election" vaguely. If it has any such technical meaning, I do not know.

H. H. THE MAHARAJA GAEKWAR OF BARODA: That is the line on which we are working.

MR. GANDHI: I know Your Highness's scheme.

H. H. THE MAHARAJA GAEKWAR OF BARODA: The object being that each individual, irrespective of class or creed, should be able to vote.

MR. GANDHI: Yes, I know.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 156-66

17. LETTER TO LORD WILLINGDON

KINGSLEY HALL,
S. W. E. 3,
September 18, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Your air mail letter of the 4th came to me as a great relief. The same mail brought me letters from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru informing me of your very kind letters to them. All this makes my burden easy and I thank you for it. I thank you too for giving prompt attention to my letter regarding Dr. Ansari and Seths Jamal Mohammad and Birla. I suppose, in due course I shall hear from S.O.S.[1] also.

I understand what you say about Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and appreciate the frankness with which you have written about him. But I am hoping that your judgment will prove [to] have been unjustified by events. You, perhaps, do not know that he has limited knowledge of English. He cannot write letters coherently in English and he has to get assistance. All the same I recognize the ludicrousness of his secretary writing to your secretary to arrange an appointment. But I would like you still to have a corner in your heart for Abdul Ghaffar Khan. I have found him to be thoroughly trustworthy and a good worker.

I fully share your sorrow over the Chittagong murder and am doing all I can to wean the mad youths from their error.

I am glad to be able to tell you that I have received from all classes of people nothing but genuine kindness. As you know, I am deliberately living in the East End of London, and in an institution which is designed for the service of the working classes living in the East End. I therefore come in daily contact with simple poor people, and it is a matter of joy to me to see them greeting me. I do not at all feel that I am in the midst of strangers.

For the rest, it is too early for me yet to say anything.

I hope that this will find both you and Lady Willingdon in the enjoyment of excellent health.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 17778

[1] Secretary of State

18. *LETTER TO WILLIAM H. UKERS*[1]

[After *September 18, 1931*]

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. If and when India comes to her own, it does not follow that the British Indian Tea Estates, or any other British interests, will be confiscated. On the contrary, every legitimate interest will receive the fullest protection, but the legitimacy of all foreign and other interests will certainly be examined by an impartial Tribunal.

From a photostat: S.N. 17794

19. *WHAT I WANT*

The Editor has kindly asked me to say in these columns "what I want". .The title is a misnomer. I am here merely as an agent for the Indian National Congress, and I can want nothing apart from the Congress. "What I want", therefore, means what the Indian National Congress wants.

Let me then introduce my principal, the Indian National Congress, to the reader. It is perhaps the oldest political organization in India and claims to represent the whole of India. I know that some people would deny this claim. I can only say that it is made by right of service.

The Indian National Congress is over forty-seven years old. It was conceived by an Englishman, Allan Octavius Hume. It has had, besides Hindus, Mohammedan, Parsi and Christian presidents. It had two women as presidents, Dr. Annie Besant and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. It has zamindars, too, as its members.

The Indian National Congress is no respector of persons. It knows no distinction between classes or creeds or the sexes. It has always championed the cause of the so-called untouchables, and has of recent years appointed an anti-untouchability committee for hastening the destruction of untouchability.

[1] Editor of the *Tea and Coffee Trade Journal* of New York. In a letter dated September 18 he had asked how Gandhiji's plans of a free India were likely to affect the tea industry.

But the unchallenged and unchallengeable claim of the Indian National Congress consists in its representing the millions of dumb paupers living in the seven hundred thousand Indian villages who constitute over 85 per cent of the population.

It is in the name of this great organization that I claim:

(1) Complete independence for India.

(2) This does not exclude partnership at will and on terms of absolute equality.

(3) Nor does this exclude Federation or such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of India.

I hope the readers of *The Daily Mail* will not be frightened by the claim boldly put forth on behalf of the Congress. "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." On the strength of the wise saying nineteen hundred years old, I hope that Englishmen and Englishwomen will not grudge India the freedom which she has remained without by reason of British rule.

No reason should be necessary for a self-evident truth. Independence is every nation's birthright.

It is India's also. But it may not be out of place to mention here that the people of India under British rule have become progressively poor and emasculate. The village industry has been killed and a whole nation has been disarmed. Nothing less than complete freedom in every sense of the term can make India happy and strong.

M. K. GANDHI

The Daily Mail, 19-9-1931

20. DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

September 19, 1931

Seated on the floor in the centre of the hall at Kingsley Settlement yesterday afternoon, Mr. Gandhi gave a special and strictly private reception to a group of youngsters, none of whom was over twelve, from among the children of Bow. Grown-ups were strictly excluded with the exception of one or two of Miss Lester's helpers, and the genial figures of Mr. and Mrs. George Lansbury and the dignified Prime Minister of Bhavnagar, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani.

But immediately after the meeting (writes a correspondent) Mr. Gandhi himself told me all about it.

Questions about the weather in India, about the games the Indian children played, and so on, led to one child asking about the language I spoke.

This gave me just the opportunity I wanted, and I began talking about the common source of many of our words. I took "pater", "father", and the Hindu "*pita*"; and "mater", "mother", and our own "*mata*". When I asked what that showed, they called out, "It shows we are all of the same breed."

Then we are all one family and ought to be friends, I said, and they agreed.

I then asked if any of the boys hit back, and ten or twelve brave boys put their hands up. So this gave me a chance for a little lesson in the principle of non-violence, and I asked what they really should have done instead. "Make friends", they replied, and I told them to remember this.

I do like the London children so much and it has been so delightful to meet them both here and in some of their homes which I visited this morning.

As a result of this meeting, some of the children expressed their determination to send a little deputation to Mr. Gandhi with a message of friendship to the children of India.

The Sunday Observer, 20-9-1931

21. SPEECH AT RECEPTION[1]

LONDON,
September 19, 1931

I have come to England to represent the starving millions of my country and I am so glad to be in the midst of the people of the East End. I shall always be enriched by the affection with which I have been received.

I was prepared for curiosity because of the costume I wear as the representative of the poor people of India, but I feel that my reception is due to something other than curiosity.

The Sunday Times, 20-9-1931

[1] This was arranged by Muriel Lester at Kingsley Hall to enable some of her friends to meet Gandhiji.

22. *LETTER TO GUNTRAM PRUFER*

[After *September 19, 1931*]

Thanks for letter. It is too premature at present to envisage a visit to Germany.[1]

From a photostat: S.N. 17798

23. *GUJARAT KHADI*

If Gujarat does not use Gujarat's khadi, who else will? If the Gujaratis cast aside Gujarat khadi saying that it is coarse, not durable and expensive, who else will use it and why should they? It is through similar pretexts that religions have perished, countries have been ruined, and men have suffered a downfall. If you find Gujarat's khadi rough and coarse, have it produced fine and smooth. If it is expensive, it will certainly become cheap if larger quantities of it are sold.

Everyone knows that khadi made in Gujarat today is finer, more durable and cheaper than it was ten years ago. Its quality will improve even more if its sales are larger. Whether this improvement takes place or not rests entirely with the Gujaratis themselves. The latter can reject it by regarding it as expensive or, alternatively, they can accept it by looking upon it as something belonging to them despite its high price and, by doing so, bring about an improvement in its quality and variety, beautify it, and make it even inexpensive.

With this worthy objective, a devotee of khadi suggests that the Provincial Committee should celebrate a Gujarat Khadi Week. During that week, the Committee should collect khadi from all those places where stocks have accumulated and men and women volunteers should go from door to door and sell it. The total quantity of khadi produced in Gujarat is so small that, if it means, Ahmedabad alone can buy it up. It is not for me to say how the Week should be celebrated. After having collected all the khadi and paying up the respective dues to the various production centres, the Committee should add up the entire

[1] The addressee in his letter of September 19 had urged Gandhiji to pay a visit to Germany on his way back home.

amount and find out the average price, and then sell it without incurring any loss. Selling it at a loss would be business practice. Here the question is not one of business but of patriotism. Patriotism can pay any price. Just as a mother does not regard her children as expensive or ugly and abandon them but sacrifices herself for their sake, similarly, even if Gujarat does something of this sort, that will be enough. Gujarat does not have to sacrifice itself, it may perhaps have to pay a slightly higher price.

The second suggestion made by the devotee of khadi is that workers in Gujarat should use only khadi made in Gujarat.

Many other ways of improving the sales of khadi in Gujarat can be thought of, only one must be earnest about it. Where there is a will, there is certainly a way.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 20-9-1931

24. *INTERVIEW TO "THE POST"*

LONDON,
[*September 20, 1931*][1]

In the course of the interview we touched on his attitude to Britain. He said:

I do not hate the British, but I hate British rule.

Gandhi did not think that the withdrawal of the British officials from India would be a very serious difficulty, though some of them could remain if they liked, "but", he explained, "on our terms". I asked whether he approved of Indians taking posts under British rule with the view of gaining experience in the work of government, and Gandhi replied that, in the days of non-co-operation he had, of course, advised against it, and that so far as the experience was concerned, it was of no great value. On the subject of the efficiency of the British officials in India, he remarked:

They are efficient in their own way and for their own interest.

From further questions it appeared that Gandhi referred only to the actions of the officials in the working of the existing system. Even so, however, I felt that more light on the point would be useful, and I said: "You have frequently criticized British officials in land assessment and other cases. Do you

[1] The interview was held in London on a Sunday morning. Gandhiji was away from London the four Sundays previous to the publication of the interview, which would seem to leave September 20 as the likely date.

think that the reports you have challenged from time to time were consciously misleading?" Gandhi returned:

No, or very rarely were they consciously wrong. But injustice is done, and it doesn't matter to the patient if he is killed through design or merely through ignorance or accident.

The interview terminated with the repetition of two phrases Gandhiji had previously used.

I wish all nations the freedom that I desire for India, and, in my opinion, the freedom of India means the freedom of the world.[1]

The Post, 24-10-1931

25. *INTERVIEW TO MRS. KNIGHT*

LONDON,
[*September 20, 1931*]

Gandhi will do nothing for the Meerut prisoners.[2] He dismisses their case with the remark that they were not included in the amnesty which followed his Agreement with the Viceroy, because they were not non-violent.

This transpired at a meeting in London between Gandhi and Mrs. Knight, the mother of Lester Hutchinson, one of the Meerut prisoners who have been released on bail and is now lying seriously ill as a result of his suffering in jail.

Gandhi added that, though he knew Hutchinson was seriously ill, he could do nothing for him.

Asked whether he could not raise the question of the Meerut trial at the Round Table Conference, he replied that he could not, since the proceedings of the Conference were secret and private.

The Daily Worker, 21-9-1931

[1] The report concluded: "Despite his smallness and frailness, he is imposing; and such personal magnetism has hitherto been outside my experience. The humble man is impregnable; that I have often repeated; but only now do I realize the truth of the remark. Gandhi's humility is a thing for tears."

[2] At the instance of the District Magistrate of Meerut twenty-eight trade union leaders were arrested in Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Poona, Chandpur and Allahabad under Sec. 121(A) of I.P.C. which dealt with conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor. The trial lasted more than 4½ years and resulted in the conviction of many. The motive, according to Gandhiji, was "to strike terror".

26. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

KINGSLEY HALL, BOW,
LONDON, E.,
September 22, 1931

CHI. SUSHILA[1],

I have your letter. I am writing this while attending the Conference. Mahadev, Pyarelal, Devdas and Mirabehn are with me. The cold here is still bearable. But the work has turned out to be heavier than I had thought. I cannot say what the outcome will be. I shall be here for at least a month longer. I got Manilal's cable a little late. It is natural that you two should wish to come here, but it is best that you should restrain the wish. Staying with me, you would not be able to tour and see this country well, and the expense, I think, would be much too heavy and beyond our means.

Jayashankar's death was a release to him from his pain. It would be very good if the two brothers settled down there. As long as you are there, see that you do your work well and sincerely.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4786

27. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

September 22, 1931

CHI. JAMNA,

You must have read Purushottam's letter. Now my advice is that we should forget all about his getting married. Only remember that when he decides to marry, I shall be ready to find for him a suitable bride. We should be happy if he can observe *brahmacharya* all his life.

I hope you are keeping good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 849. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Wife of Manilal Gandhi

28. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

September 22, 1931

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

I got your beautiful letter. You are bound to rise spiritually. You should not feel hurt that Jamna thinks that you wish to get married. As long as you have a mind free from passion or as long as you do not desire to marry, no one can force you to get married. As for me, I would always support you.

You have been doing very good work. We shall be here for one month more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 903. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

29. INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE CHAPLIN[1]

LONDON,
September 22, 1931

Gandhiji had not heard of him, but he had evidently heard of Gandhiji's spinning-wheel and the very first question he asked was why Gandhiji was against machinery. The question delighted Gandhiji who explained to him in detail why the six months' unemployment of the whole peasant population of India made it important for him to restore them to their former subsidiary industry.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN: Is it then only as regards cloth?

GANDHIJI: Precisely. In cloth and food every nation should be self-contained. We were self-contained and want to be that again. England with her large-scale production has to look for a market elsewhere. We call it exploitation. And an exploiting England is a danger to the world, but if that is so, how much more so would be an exploiting India, if she took to machinery and produced cloth many times in excess of its requirements.

[1] The interview took place at the house of Dr. Katial in Canning Town. The report has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" and *My Autobiography* by Charlie Chaplin.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN: So the question is confined only to India? But supposing you had in India the independence of Russia, and you could find other work for your unemployed and ensure equitable[1] distribution of wealth, you would not then despise machinery? You would subscribe to shorter hours of work and more leisure for the worker?

GANDHIJI: Certainly.[2]

CHARLIE CHAPLIN: Naturally I am in sympathy with India's aspirations and struggle for freedom. Nonetheless, I am somewhat confused by your abhorrence of machinery.

GANDHIJI: I understand. But before India can achieve those aims, she must first rid herself of English rule. Machinery in the past has made us dependent on England, and the only way we can rid ourselves of the dependence is to boycott all goods made by machinery. That is why we have made it the patriotic duty of every Indian to spin his own cotton and weave his own cloth. This is our form of attacking a very powerful nation like England—and, of course, there are other reasons. India has a different climate from England; and her habits and wants are different. In England the cold weather necessitates arduous industry and an involved economy. You need the industry of eating utensils; we use our fingers. And so it translates into manifold differences.

Young India, 8-10-1931, and *My Autobiography*

30. SPEECH AT MEETING OF FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

LONDON,
September 22, 1931

LORD CHANCELLOR,

With reference to the very careful statement made by the Secretary of State yesterday, and in view of the whole-hearted support given by Sir Akbar Hydari to the proposals contained in the statement, I feel it to be my duty on behalf of the Congress to state its position.

Every thoughtful Congressman must sympathize with the British nation in the crisis that has overtaken it; but I would be false to my trust if I did not express my surprise and sorrow over

[1] The source has equable.

[2] What follows is reproduced from Charlie Chaplin's *My Autobiography*.

the manner of the action taken in India.[1] I recognize my limitations; my acquaintance with financial matters is of a very elementary type. I must, therefore, leave the merits to the Congress experts for examination. But what pains me is the fact that the decision in India was taken over the heads of the Legislatures, such as they are, and that especially when, in this place, we are expected to contemplate an early establishment of full responsible government. This step taken by the Government of India is striking and, in my humble opinion, unmistakable proof of the unbending and unbendable attitude of the Government of India. Evidently, on matters of the most vital importance to the nation, we are not yet considered fit to be consulted, much less to decide what is good for us. This is a view I must repudiate with all the strength I can command; and, in the circumstances, so far as the Congress is concerned, I am sorry I am unable to give the support which the Secretary of State asks for the measures taken in India.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 278-79

31. LETTER TO "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

LONDON,
September 23, 1931

SIR,

My attention has been called to a letter in the *Manchester Guardian* of Monday, September 21, calling attention to some stamps which had printed on them the words "Boycott British goods". If such stamps have been employed by any Congress authority after the agreement of March 5,1931, they are clearly contrary to that agreement, which declares that only an economic boycott should be permissible in future. But such stamps were undoubtedly used during the struggle before the agreement was reached. The stamps in question could not have been used after the agreement. Whenever I have found a breach of the agreement, I have immediately done all in my power to stop it.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

The Manchester Guardian, 26-9-1931

[1] In the wake of a financial crisis the Government of India had announced, on September 21, their decision to abandon the gold standard. An Ordinance was issued relieving the Government from their obligation under the Currency Act to sell gold or sterling and the three days from September 22 to 24 were declared public holidays. *India in 1931-32*

32. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

LONDON,
September 23, 1931

We discussed our differences and it was a very friendly conversation.

The Hindustan Times, 26-9-1931

33. SPEECH AT GUILDHOUSE CHURCH[2]

LONDON,
September 23, 1931

You will be astonished to hear from me that, although to all appearances my mission is political, I would ask you to accept my assurance that its roots are—if I may use that term—spiritual. It is commonly known, though perhaps not believed, that I claim that at least my politics are not divorced from morality, from spirituality, from religion. I have claimed—and the claim is based upon extensive experience—that a man who is trying to discover and follow the will of God cannot possibly leave a single field of life untouched. I came also, in the course of my service, to the conclusion that if there was any field of life where morality, where truth, where fear of God, were not essential, that field should be given up entirely.

But I found also that the politics of the day are no longer a concern of kings, but that they affect the lowest strata of society. And I found, through bitter experience that, if I wanted to do social service, I could not possibly leave politics alone.

Do not please consider that I want to speak to you tonight about politics and somehow or other connect voluntary poverty with politics. That is not my intention. I have simply given you an introduction how I came to believe in the necessity of voluntary poverty for any social worker or for any political worker who

[1] Gandhiji made the statement after his meeting with the Aga Khan at the Ritz Hotel late in the night. No report of the interview is available.

[2] The meeting was held under the auspices of the Franciscan Society with Dr. Maude Royden in the chair. The subject was "Voluntary Poverty".

wanted to remain untouched by the hideous immorality and untruth that one smells today in ordinary politics. The stench that comes from that life has appeared to some to be so suffocating that they came to the conclusion that politics were not for a god-fearing man.

Had that been really so, I feel that it would have been a disaster for mankind. Find out for yourselves, in the light of what I am now saying, whether directly or indirectly every activity of yours today in this one of the greatest cities of the world is not touched by politics.

Well, then, when I found myself drawn into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me in order to remain absolutely untouched by immorality, by untruth, by what is known as political gain.

In the course of my search, I made several discoveries which I must, for tonight, leave alone. But, if I am not mistaken, this necessity for poverty came to me first of all.

I do not propose to take you through all the details of that act or performance—interesting and, to me, sacred though they are—but I can only tell you that it was a difficult struggle in the beginning and it was a wrestle with my wife and—as I can vividly recall—with my children also.

Be that as it may, I came definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possessions.

I cannot tell you with truth that, when this belief came to me, I discarded everything immediately. I must confess to you that progress at first was slow. And now, as I recall those days of struggle, I remember that it was also painful in the beginning. But, as days went by, I saw that I had to throw overboard many other things which I used to consider as mine, and a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up those things. And one after another then, by almost geometric progression, the things slipped away from me. And, as I am describing my experiences, I can say a great burden fell off my shoulders, and I felt that I could now walk with ease and do my work also in the service of my fellowmen with great comfort and still greater joy. The possession of anything then became a troublesome thing and a burden.

Exploring the cause of that joy, I found that, if I kept anything as my own, I had to defend it against the whole world. I found also that there were many people who did not have the

thing, although they wanted it; and I would have to seek police assistance also if hungry, famine-stricken people, finding me in a lonely place, wanted not merely to divide the thing with me but to dispossess me. And I said to myself: if they want it and would take it, they do so not from any malicious motive, but they would do it because theirs was a greater need than mine.

And then I said to myself: possession seems to me to be a crime. I can only possess certain things when I know that others, who also want to possess similar things, are able to do so. But we know—every one of us can speak from experience—that such a thing is an impossibility. Therefore, the only thing that can be possessed by all is non-possession, not to have anything whatsoever. In other words, a willing surrender.

You might then well say to me: but you are keeping many things on your body even as you are speaking about voluntary poverty and not possessing anything whatsoever! And your taunt would be right, if you only superficially understood the meaning of the thing that I am speaking about just now. It is really the spirit behind. Whilst you have the body, you will have to have something to clothe the body with also. But then you will take for the body not all that you can get, but the least possible, the least with which you can do. You will take for your house not many mansions, but the least cover that you can do with. And similarly with reference to your food and so on.

Now you see that there is here a daily conflict between what you and we understand today as civilization and the state which I am picturing to you as a state of bliss and a desirable state. On the one hand, the basis of culture or civilization is understood to be the multiplication of all your wants. If you have one room, you will desire to have two rooms, three rooms, the more the merrier. And similarly, you will want to have as much furniture as you can put in your house, and so on, endlessly. And the more you possess the better culture you represent, or some such thing. I am putting it, perhaps, not as nicely as the advocates of that civilization would put it, but I am putting it to you in the manner I understand it.

And, on the other hand, you find the less you possess the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for enjoyment of this life, but for enjoyment of personal service to your fellow beings; service to which you dedicate yourselves, body, soul and mind.

Well, here you find there is ample room for hypocrisy and humbug, because a man or a woman may easily deceive himself

or herself and deceive his or her neighbours also, by saying: "In spirit I have given up all possessions, and yet externally I am possessing these things; you must not examine my deed, you must examine my intention; and of my intention only I must remain the sole witness." That is a trap, and a death trap. How are you then to justify the possession even of a piece of cloth two or three or four yards, say, in length and a yard in width? How can you justify even the possession of that piece of cloth in order to cover your body somewhat, when you know that, if you left that piece of cloth alone, even that would be taken over by someone—not maliciously again—but because he would want it for he has not even so much as that piece of cloth? I am witness, eye-witness, of millions of human beings who have not even so much as that piece of cloth. How are you then to justify your act of possessing this thing with your intention not to possess anything at all?

Well, there is a remedy provided for this dilemma, this difficulty, this contradiction in life—that if you must possess these things, you must hold them at the disposal of those who want them. What happens is that, if somebody comes and wants your piece of cloth, you are not going to keep it from him, you are not going to shut any doors, you are certainly not going to the policeman to ask him to help you to keep these things.

And you have also got to be content with what the world will give you. The world may give you that piece of cloth or may not because, if you do not possess anything, naturally you do not possess the token coin with which you may buy clothing or food. You have got then to live purely on the charity of the world. And even when charitable people give you something, that something does not become your possession. You simply retain it with the fullest intention of that thing being surrendered to anybody who wishes to take it. If somebody comes and uses force against you to dispossess you, you may not go and report to the next policeman you meet and say you have been assaulted. You will not have been assaulted.

Well, that, to my mind, is the meaning of voluntary poverty. I have given you an ideal. Dr. Royden has claimed that I am the greatest exponent of voluntary poverty in the world. I must, in all humility, disown any such claim whatsoever. And this I say to you not because of false modesty, but I say it to you sincerely, believing it to be true. I have given you but a little of my conception of voluntary poverty. And I must own to you that I am far from having realized that ideal in its fullness. In order to rea-

lize that ideal in its fullness, there must be a definite intention and conviction in my mind that I do not want to, I must not, possess anything on this earth as my property, not even this body, because this body also is a possession.

If you believe with me—as you must believe with me if you are church-goers, that is, if you believe in God—you believe that body and soul are not one and the same thing; but that the body is a house only, a temporary residence for a soul or a spirit within; and if you believe that, as you do believe, I take it—then it follows that even the body is not yours. It has been given to you as a temporary possession, and it can also be taken from you by Him who has given it to you.

Therefore, having that absolute conviction in me, such must be my constant desire, that this body also may be surrendered at the will of God, and while it is at my disposal, must be used not for dissipation, not for self-indulgence, not for pleasure, but merely for service and service the whole of our waking hours.

And if this is true with reference to the body, how much more with reference to clothing and many other things that we use?

Having got that conviction and held it for so many years, I am here to give you my evidence against myself, that I have not reached that perfect state of voluntary poverty. I am a poor man, in the sense you understand of struggling to reach that ideal, not poor in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word poor.

As a matter of fact, when I was once challenged by someone, I was able to claim that to my neighbours, and people in the world I seemed to be the richest man on earth, for the richest man is really one who, possessing nothing, has everything at his disposal.

And those who have actually followed out this vow of voluntary poverty to the fullest extent possible (to reach absolute perfection is an impossibility, but the fullest possible extent for a human being) those who have reached the ideal of that state, they testify that, when you dispossess yourself of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world. In other words, you really get all that is in reality necessary for you, everything. If food is necessary, food will come to you.

Many of you are men and women of prayer, and I have heard from very many Christian lips that they got their food in answer to prayer, that they get everything in answer to prayer. I believe it. But I want you to come with me a step further, and believe with me that those who voluntarily give up everything on earth, including the body, that is to say, have readiness to give up everything (and they must examine themselves critically, rigidly,

and give always an adverse judgment against themselves)—those who will follow this out will really find that they are never in want.

And I will confess to you that, when I felt God had given me some portion of the riches of the earth and when I had many possessions, I had not the facilities for possessing things that I have at this time. I had not certainly one-millionth part of the ability to command money and everything that I need for service.

A spirit of service had come to me even when I was practising and earning money and was in possession of several things, but at that time I had certainly not the capacity for getting whatever I wanted for service. But today (whether it is good for me or bad for me I do not know, God alone knows) I can give you this evidence, that I have never been in want.

After a period when I had really dispossessed myself by intention and had no hankering after anything that I could call my own, and began to share everything I possessed in common with my neighbours (I cannot share everything with the whole world; if I share with my neighbours, I do share with the whole world, my neighbours also doing likewise; if we do that, it is all a limited human being can do) but immediately I came to that state to a fair extent, I found that I was never in want.

Want must not, again, be taken literally. God is the hardest task-master I have known on this earth, and He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or your body is failing you and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not lose your faith and that He is always at your beck and call, but on His terms, not on your terms. So I have found. I cannot really recall a single instance when, at the eleventh hour, He has forsaken me. And I have got this reputation, which I can repeat to you, a reputation for being one of the best beggars in India. And, as my critics will tell you, at one time I collected one crore of rupees; in pounds, shillings and pence I cannot count it for you, but it is some horribly large sum (about £750,000), but I had no difficulty in collecting it. And since then, whenever any emergency has arisen, not for any consideration, not in the soul of my fundamental being, can I recall a single instance of my failing to obtain whatever was necessary for service.

But you will say: this is in answer to prayer. It is not just an answer to prayer, it is a scientific result of this vow of non-possession or vow of voluntary poverty. You do not want to possess anything whatever: and the more therefore you simplify your life, dispossess yourself, the better it is for you.

Immediately you come to that, you can command anything. You can command vanities, but if you only once take possession of these, this power will immediately be gone; you must not take for yourself. If you do, you are done for. I have known this happen in so many instances. Many a man has said: "Oh yes, God has now answered my prayer for money or possessions. I will now keep this—this Koh-i-noor diamond, or whatever it may be." That will be the last time. He won't be able to defend that diamond.

Therefore, all I am just now holding out before you as a grand thing is that you can command all the resources of the world for service. To one who does not believe, that may seem an arrogant statement to make. But, as I believe, it is not an arrogant thing to say that you can command all the resources of the earth for service—to the extent of your ability to serve. If you want to command the whole services of the world, it is not enough to go down to some of those houses in the East End, find out the distress of those who live there and fling in their faces a few coppers; you will not have all the resources of the world for that; God will fling in your face also a few coppers.

But if you surrender yourself, body, soul and mind, and give yourself up to the world, then I say: the treasures of the world are at your feet, not for your enjoyment, but for the enjoyment of that service, only yours for that service.

The moral that I would have us to draw from this talk that I have given to you is really very apposite at this time. I want you to believe me when I tell you that my whole heart goes out to this nation in its distress. I cannot possibly present my solution of your financial difficulty. You are great enough, resourceful enough, to find out your own remedies. But I would ask you to elaborate this thought in your own minds in connection with the present distress.

Mr. C. F. Andrews brought to my notice a letter that was written by the Prime Minister to a correspondent and which he told me yesterday was being used as an advertisement throughout the District Railway, probably in the Tubes also; it runs somewhat like this: "You must buy only British goods; must employ only British labour, and try to buy as much as you can." That is one remedy I know. But I want to suggest to you that, in order to solve the problem of distress in the world, this idea of voluntary poverty is a root idea. No doubt, with your resourcefulness, you will tide over the difficulty and feel that there was nothing wrong. If you will permit me to say so, that would be

perhaps short-sighted, for a time perhaps has come for a revision of values.

But again I must not go into deep waters. I can only throw out this hint to those who can appreciate the necessity of voluntary poverty for service. I have not tonight presented this blessed thing for the acceptance of all: though let me add that, in the innermost recesses of my heart, I feel that the world would not go all wrong, would not become a world of idiots, if all of us took the vow of voluntary poverty. But I know that this is almost an impossible thing. Everything is possible for God but, humanly speaking, it is wise to say that it is an impossible thing. But it is not an impossible thing; indeed, I hold it to be absolutely indispensable that those who give themselves wholly to the service of their fellow-beings must take the vow of voluntary poverty.

Try to find out for yourself whether you are not thereby assisting very materially in solving this great national problem that today faces you.

You will not have solved the problem if the people, who do not want to give up their salaries or whatever they are required to give up, are compelled to give them up by law. While they say: "What can we do? We do not want to resist; we cannot resist," their minds are still hankering after these things.

But imagine that, in the midst of this hankering, there is a body of servants arising, who will themselves become voluntarily poor. They would be like lighthouses to guide the paths of those who do not know what voluntary poverty is because they know only involuntary poverty. I do not go among my fellows who starve and talk of voluntary poverty; I do not tell them how blessed they would be if they changed that involuntary poverty into voluntary. There is no such thing as magic of that character on this earth. It is a painful process, and these men have first of all to have the necessities of life before I can talk to them of voluntary poverty.

What does happen is this: that a man like me going among them, living in their midst as best he can their life, can bring a ray of hope into their hearts. They will accept remedies that a man like me may suggest to them. At least, if I cannot suggest any immediate remedy, they would find in a man like me a friend. They would say: "He is happy although he possesses nothing; how is it?" I do not need to argue with them; they begin to argue for themselves.

How can I share these richest treasures from my experience with everybody on earth? I could not. But today, having under-

taken to speak on voluntary poverty, I am sharing, to a certain extent only, these treasured experiences of mine not amongst a few hundred people here but amongst millions of people. I tell you that it is beyond description, the bliss, the happiness, and the ability that this voluntary poverty gives one. I can only say: try it and experiment with it, test it for yourselves.

I thank you for giving me your undivided attention. There are still exactly ten minutes left before the hour of prayer, and if any of you wish to ask me any questions, I shall be glad. You need not hesitate to ask anything that is in your mind; you will never offend me by asking any questions, let them be as awkward as they may be.

Q. Can the Mahatma tell us how he can justify collecting large sums of money when Jesus, the Buddha and other great religious teachers who have practised voluntary poverty have never asked for or received large sums of money? I cannot reconcile this with the rest of what he told us.

A. Did these great teachers never ask for or receive moneys? After Jesus many Christians, who believed in poverty also, took moneys and used them for service. And I can speak with better confidence about the Buddha who is reported in his own lifetime to have founded institutions. He could not possibly found institutions without money. And it is said that they who gave themselves body, soul and mind gave their riches also and placed them at the feet of the Buddha, who gladly accepted them—but not for himself.

Q. Why should we serve our fellow-beings?

A. In order that we may see a glimpse of God through them; because they have got the same spirit as we have, and unless we learn that, there is a barrier drawn between God and ourselves; if we want to demolish that barrier, the beginning is made by complete identification with our fellow-beings.

The Guildhouse, 23-9-1931

34. SPEECH AT MEETING OF M.P.S[1]

LONDON,
September 23, 1931

The Congress stands for complete independence, and complete independence does not mean, and has never meant, isolation in any form, and does not exclude partnership on absolutely equal terms to be terminated at the will of either party. It has appeared to me strange that this claim should be repudiated or laughed at by Englishmen, who themselves were never satisfied with anything less than complete freedom for themselves. I think that any nation or any body of people, after they have become conscious of their national right, would never be satisfied with anything less than complete independence.

It means to us full control over our defences, full control over our external affairs, and full control over finances, and the discussion on these points gave rise to the much-used expression "safeguards". I have no doubt that you know of the safeguards that were provisionally adjusted by the last R.T.C. I do not hesitate to say, on behalf of the Congress, that those safeguards will not be accepted by the Congress. Now if we have no control over the army or over the defence—and external affairs are also a reserved subject according to the provisional reservations of the R.T.C.—it is certainly not complete independence: it is not even a moderate form of self-government. A person does not enjoy self-government if he depends on others for his defence.

I know that it has been contended that India is not able to defend herself. Before the British advent I claim that we were able to survive invasions, and there were many invasions made, and we were able to maintain intact the civilization that we had inherited from time immemorial.

We have disarmament in India—not voluntary, but superimposed. The Hindus and Muslims are living more in peace in what is called Princes' India than in British India. There have certainly been a few riots, but my claim is that British arms are

[1] The meeting was held at the House of Commons under the auspices of the Commonwealth of India League. Morley, M.P., presided in the absence of Horrabin, Chairman of the League. M.P.s of all the three parties were present.

not strong enough to prevent these. If British armies were removed, it would not mean "suicide" for India, as is sometimes stated.

To take charge of our defence does not mean that we should do away with every British soldier and officer, if British soldiers or officers would be good enough to serve us.

Mr. Gandhi then said that he could not understand those who said that the British would never serve under India in this way.

Is this a proper attitude if there is to be any conciliation with India on terms of proper equality?

Complete independence must mean complete control of the army. It means that the civil power should have absolute control over the military power, that the military would not act without the sanction of the civil power.

Mr. Gandhi then pointed out that the Indians believed the administration of India to be the most expensive in the world, and India, he said, can no longer afford it.

I am convinced that it would be suicidal for India to consent to those safeguards and take the mere husk of independence. To consent to these safeguards means farming out our revenue to the extent of 80 per cent. Do you suppose that we can pay for our education, hygiene, hospitals, roads and constructive works, which must be undertaken, and should have been undertaken over a generation ago, with only 20 per cent of our revenue left to us?

I would not touch that independence; I would far rather remain in compulsory subjection and declare myself a rebel than take charge of a government that I know is bound to declare itself bankrupt in, say, five or ten years. No Englishman, if he were in our shoes, would accept that; and you will find that I would fight with my blood as a civil resister rather than co-operate with you and become a slave, which in my humble opinion is what is meant by these safeguards.

As regards "safeguards" for Europeans, Mr. Gandhi said:

I can understand the Muslims asking for protection, and the Sikhs, and I can understand still more the untouchables; but for the Europeans, that is to say, the rulers, asking for protection from three hundred million slaves, or subjects, call them by what sweet name you will, that surpasses my understanding. You must live with us on terms of goodwill. Do you want protection from the people you serve?

No protection will protect British trade in India if that trade is inimical to Indian interests. Every "interest"—British

or Indian, will have to pass this acid test: Is it or is it not in the interests of the people?

Partnership does mean favoured treatment for the partner, but that favoured treatment would naturally carry with it the condition that the goods were goods needed in India and of the standard quality and price. I would prefer the British typewriter and the British watch, even though I had to pay a little more, and that will be the attitude of three hundred million partners when this weight, which is gradually sinking them, is lifted from their heads. I imagine a possible India living in perfect equality with Great Britain. A partnership mutually beneficial, not framed for the exploitation of any race on earth, would be a partnership which the gods themselves would descend to witness, because it would be for the good of all the nations of the earth. India would stand erect before the world, but not to exploit any other nation, because she herself has tasted the bitterness of exploitation.

Indian News, 8-10-1931

35. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

September 24, 1931

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I get here less time than I used to get there. I can go to bed between 11 and 12 at night. Mirabehn wakes up every day at four. After prayer I again go to sleep. Then I get up at 6.15 and go for an hour's walk. I suppose you read in the letters from others about all that happens here. I keep very good health. The cold has not yet begun. I hope the atmosphere in the Ashram is becoming purer, and that everyone takes part in the prayers, in the spinning *yajna* and in the other activities regularly and with zest.

Write to me from time to time and give all the news from there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

36. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

September 24, 1931

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

I hope your mind is at peace and you are keeping good health. I do not immediately get all the letters to read, so I do not know whether there is one from you. Write to me every week and pour out your heart.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 61. Also C.W. 8786. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

37. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

September 24, 1931

CHI. PREMA,

Narandas writes to tell me that you are calm now. But I am unhappy that you have still not started writing to me. You can certainly help to banish my worry on your account.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10264. Also C.W. 6713. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

38. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
September 24, 1931

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: . . . Experience in other countries has proved that democratic constitutions are much more expensive than bureaucratic constitutions. I mean, if there are any among us who think that, by adopting a democratic constitution, we are going to economize, let me tell them frankly that they are living in a paradise of their own. I will not use the ordi-

nary expression. Party organizations will spring up; party funds will have to be brought into existence; all the machinery and paraphernalia of Western constitutions will have to be brought into existence before we can cope with our responsibility. Even though the salaries of the Services might be reduced to Rs. 500, even though a maximum amount of income might be prescribed for lawyers like Mr. Jinnah, still Mahatma Gandhi will have to face this problem, that he will have to find the funds to meet the requirements of the democratic constitution.

MR. GANDHI: No, I shall presently seek shelter in Bikaner or Porbandar!

H.H. THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER: You will be welcome there; we shall be honoured.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 346, 371

39. INTERVIEW TO "JOHN BULL"

LONDON,
[On or before *September 25, 1931*]

I was a very ordinary boy and had no inkling as to my future destiny. I used to run about the streets barefoot and play with the other lads.

I went to an Indian school, for, of course, I was born in India; not Africa, as people think. I had a happy childhood, and was not precocious in any way. My father was Prime Minister of the State in which I was born.

The call to lead India did not come to me in the nature of a sudden revelation. It simply came when it came. It was rather a gradual realization. I prepared for it by fasting and self-discipline. My political work grew out of my spiritual preparation.

You ask me to compare the poverty in the East with that of the West? It is impossible. The two cannot be compared. In the East, poverty exists to a degree undreamt of in the West. Many thousands are entirely without food, and quite without shelter.

You ask me how I would fulfil my dreams if I had the power, what I would do to wake the "dumb, starving millions" from their lethargy, make them articulate, and give them food.

I would make them work. At what? At the charkha and handlooms. I would educate them. Yes, on Indian lines.

I would build new roads—fine roads, that would benefit both man and beast. I picture the new India as filled with linked villages, happy in their industries.

If India gets her freedom, I should be guided by circumstances as to whether I should take my place at the head of the nation or return quietly to my Ashram.

I should love to go back, but I should not hesitate to shoulder the burden of leadership if it came to me. I should follow the guidance of my inner voice.

Shall I go to America? Invitations have reached me, but there again I shall do as my inner voice tells me.

You ask: Is this an actual definite voice? No! it is the voice of conscience. I am prepared to compromise on non-essential matters, but not on essentials.

Yes, certainly I think the co-operation of the Indian Princes is necessary for a successful swaraj.

Enemies of India say that the Hindus and Muslims will fly at each other's throats as soon as the British rule is withdrawn. I do not believe it. We have lived together in perfect unity before—before the British advent in the seventeenth century—and we shall do so again.

But, supposing that we have to fight, we shall fight. Will the Hindus conquer, you ask. No; neither side will conquer. There might be conflict in India, but we shall come to terms and reach an agreement.

We have fought before now and come together again. The heads of the two parties, the Hindus and the Muslims, would come to terms.

Who would fight? Not the masses. They would continue to live as they do now, in perfect peace. Those who fought would be only the interested people. I think Britain is bound to concede swaraj. Sooner or later it is sure to come.

My wife has been extraordinarily good to me, and it is she who cares for my physical welfare. How did I marry her? My parents arranged the marriage, as parents do most marriages in India, but I knew her before and love existed between us.

I started life as a legal adviser to a Mussalman firm in South Africa, and when I saw that the Indians there were being persecuted, I thought it was my duty to take up their cause. I, therefore, settled in South Africa, and I was successful. The disabilities for which we were fighting were removed by a settlement of the South African government.

What would be the position of the women in India under

swaraj? They would be our co-workers and colleagues, enjoy the same rights and privileges as the men.

No, I was not surprised to find I had so many sympathizers here. I fully expected it. I am hoping that the people of Great Britain will see the utter justice of India's claim.

John Bull, 26-9-1931

40. *STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*[1]

LONDON,
September 25, 1931

We had a nice, friendly conversation—very friendly.

The Manchester Guardian, 26-9-1931

41. *STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*[2]

LONDON,
September 25, 1931

I specially wish during this all too short visit to Lancashire to see as much as possible of working people there who are engaged in the cotton trade and to get with them face to face and heart to heart whenever possible.

The Manchester Guardian, 26-9-1931

42. *STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*

SPRINGVALE GARDEN VILLAGE,
September 26, 1931

I have come to England, and now to Lancashire, in search of a way out of the difficulty. Unemployment in any country is always bad, and it would be a matter of the greatest joy to me if I could, in any shape or form, contribute towards relieving that unemployment. But I am powerless to do anything without the

[1] Gandhiji made the statement after his meeting with Lord Irwin. The meeting took place at the latter's house in Eaton Square and lasted two hours and twenty minutes. No report of the talk is available.

[2] Gandhiji made this statement on boarding the train to Lancashire at Euston in the evening.

active co-operation of Lancashire and of Englishmen in other parts of Great Britain.

The poverty I have seen distresses me, and it distresses me further to know that in this unemployment I have a kind of a share. That distress is relieved, however, by the knowledge that my part was wholly unintended; that it was as a result of the steps I took, and had to take, as part of my duty towards the largest army of unemployed to be found in the world, namely, the starving millions of India, compared with whose poverty and pauperism the poverty of Lancashire dwindles into insignificance.

I am therefore trying to meet as many Englishmen as possible, and acquaint myself with their mentality and am trying to give them, as I know it, the correct situation in India.

The Sunday Observer, 27-9-1931

43. *TALK WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF COTTON INDUSTRY*[1]

EDGEWORTH,
September 26, 1931

In his speech Mr. Gandhi outlined at considerable length his economic policy for India, and explained how the khaddar movement also had a social significance, since it was aimed at producing self-respect in the Indian villager. He drew what was generally agreed to be a heart-rending picture of Indian poverty, and said that though the conditions in Lancashire as he had seen them distressed him, they were infinitely better than those obtaining in India.

Q. Is it possible, Mr. Gandhi, to divorce boycott for a political purpose from boycott for an economic purpose?

A. When the sole object was that of punishing Britain as in 1930, when people preferred articles of American or German make to those of British make, it was avowedly of a political purpose. Even British machinery was then boycotted. But now the original economic boycott remains. You may call it boycott but

[1] The meeting was arranged by T. D. Barlow, Chairman of the Joint Committee of Cotton Trade Organizations, at his residence in the afternoon and included several prominent representatives of the cotton trade. Gandhiji, according to *The Manchester Guardian*, spoke for forty minutes, but a full report of the speech is not available since no reporters were present. Some of those present, however, sent to *The Manchester Guardian* their own accounts of what Gandhiji said (*vide* Appendix I). The brief report of the speech appearing here is from *The Manchester Guardian* while the questions and answers that follow are from Mahadev Desai's account in *Young India*, "Gandhiji in Lancashire".

it is an entirely educative effort or self-purificatory endeavour. It is an appeal to go back to our former calling, shake off idleness and earn a living, however poor, not on doles but in the sweat of their brow.

Q. But the political aspect would be there inasmuch as you would give preference to your mills over all other foreign articles.

A. The boycott was not undertaken on behalf of the mills. In fact, it was the first constructive effort begun with our quarrel with the local mill-owners, and though the mill-owners are supporting our movement, they are not controlling our policy but we are trying to influence them. And when we go out to the villages, we do not ask them to wear Indian mill cloth, we ask them to wear khadi or to make their own khadi, and every Congressman is expected to wear khadi.

Q. Whatever you may say, Mr. Gandhi, you are in for more political power, which you are bound to get, and as soon as you get it, these mill-owners, in the unscrupulousness of their greed, will build huge tariff walls and be a graver danger to your villages than even the Lancashire cotton trade.

A. If I am still living then, and if such a catastrophe happens, I make bold to say that the mills will be destroyed in the process. And, with real political power, universal adult suffrage will come and it will be impossible for the monied classes to crush the interests of poor villagers.

Q. Don't you think people themselves will go back to mill-cloth as the Americans are going back to liquor?

A. No. In America, prohibition was a mighty weapon used by a powerful nation against an unwilling people. People were accustomed to drinking. Drink was fashionable. In India, mill-cloth was never a fashion, whereas khadi has become a fashion and a passport to respectable society. And, whatever happens I shall fight on for the economic salvation of my people and that, you will agree, is worth living for and dying for.

Q. It will be an unequal fight. The rapacity of economic competition will carry everything before it.

A. God, you say, has suffered defeat at the hand of Mammon and will continue to do. Well, He will not suffer defeat in India.

The Manchester Guardian, 28-9-1931, and *Young India*, 15-10-1931

44. TALK WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF COTTON INDUSTRY[1]

DARWEN,
September 26, 1931

Pray tell me what I am to do with a fifth of the human race living on the verge of starvation and devoid of all sense of self-respect. It should occupy the attention even of unemployed Lancashire. You have told us of the help Lancashire gave us during the famine of 1899-1900. What return can we render but the blessings of the poor? I have come to give you fair trade. But, if I go without giving it, it will not be through any fault of mine. There is no bitterness in me. I claim fellowship with the lowest of animals. Why not then with Englishmen with whom we have been bound, for good or ill, for over a century and amongst whom I claim some of my dearest friends? You will find me an easy proposition, but if you will repel my advances I shall go away, not in bitterness, but with a sense that I was not pure enough to find a lodgment in your hearts.

Young India, 15-10-1931

45. INTERVIEW TO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' DEPUTATION[2]

SPRINGFIELD GARDEN VILLAGE,
September 26, 1931

There is no boycott of British cloth, as distinguished from other foreign cloth, since the 5th March when the Truce was signed. As a nation we are pledged to boycott all foreign cloth, but in case of an honourable settlement between England and India, i.e., in case of a permanent peace, I should not hesitate to give preference to Lancashire cloth to all other foreign cloth, to the extent that we may need to supplement our cloth and on agreed

[1] Gandhiji had gone to Darwen to visit the Mayor, who had invited a small group of people, representative of both sides of the cotton industry to meet Gandhiji. The report has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's account, "Gandhiji in Lancashire".

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account, "Gandhiji in Lancashire"

terms. But how much relief that can give you, I do not know. You must recognize that all the markets of the world are now not open to you. What you have done, all other nations are doing today. Even Indian mills would be producing more and more cloth every day. You, surely, will not want me to restrict Indian enterprise for the sake of Lancashire.

Young India, 15-10-1931

46. SPEECH IN LANCASHIRE

[*September 26/27, 1931*][1]

I am pained at the unemployment here. But here is no starvation or semi-starvation. In India we have both. If you went to the villages of India, you would find utter despair in the eyes of the villagers, you would find half-starved skeletons, living corpses. If India could revive them by putting life and food into them in the shape of work India would help the world. Today India is a curse. There is a party in my country which would sooner see an end to the lives of these half-starved millions in order that the rest may live. I thought of a humane method and that was to give them work with which they were familiar, which they could do in their cottages, which required no great investment in implements and of which the product could be easily sold. This is a task which is worthy of the attention even of Lancashire.

Young India, 15-10-1931

47. REFORM OF SCRIPT

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala writes:[2]

I publish this letter solely for the sake of discussion. I myself do not have any definite opinion on this matter, but I realize its importance. Shri Kishorelal has invited the opinion of scholars. The decision on script reform will not be taken on the basis of its merits or demerits, but will rather depend upon its popularity. From that standpoint, it is desirable to seek the opinion

[1] Mahadev Desai, from whose account of the speech, "Gandhiji in Lancashire" this is extracted, does not mention the date or place of the speech.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had suggested certain reforms in Gujarati script to make it approximate to Devnagari script.

of readers of *Navajivan*. If the people and the public are in favour of it, it is likely that journalists will also respond favourably.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-9-1931

48. PARSIS' PROTEST

About one hundred and seventy-five Parsis were signatories to the note of protest expressing profound disapproval of the indignities perpetrated upon Shri Abidali and other Congress picketers on the 10th of August last. Among the signatories are barristers, doctors, solicitors and professors also. I compliment the signatories on making this protest. But at the same time, I should make it clear that this protest will have hardly any effect upon those who had a hand in staging these disturbances. The real need is to come into personal contact with those liquor dealers, to formulate a scheme to find some other respectable profession for them and to develop a strong public opinion among the Parsis against this present trade of theirs. The argument put forward by these liquor dealers is that, if they give up their trade, someone else will take it up. What I have suggested to them is that, as a result of their giving up their trade, public opinion will be generated even outside the Parsi community, that it will become impossible even for others to take to that immoral trade. In *Navajivan*[1], I have already cited the example of the Bhandaris of Ratnagiri district. By giving up their hereditary profession of selling liquor, they set out on the war path. Many Kolis have done likewise. Hence, if the Parsis also adopt this reform, even though they may not be regarded as pioneers they would have emulated a worthy example and they would also have contributed their share to the national welfare work of uprooting a trade which is doing such irreparable harm to labourers.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-9-1931

[1] Perhaps a slip for *Young India*. The reference is presumably to the article "Prohibition Work at Malvan" published in *Young India*, 30-7-1931 which had described the Bhandaris' abandoning of their traditional profession of toddy-tapping under the Civil Disobedience movement.

49. LETTER TO DADOO

ON THE TRAIN,
September 27, 1931

MY DEAR DADOO,

Haji Ismail Bhabha writes complaining that satyagrahis are acting violently, that they had gone to the June meeting taking lethal weapons with them, that they were exploiting Muslim women, etc. I have written to him saying that I am writing to you. I suggest your seeing him. Our duty is to see even the opponent's viewpoint and meet it wherever we can.

I hope things are shaping and proceeding well there.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 4905

50. SPEECH AT ADULT SCHOOL[1]

WEST BRADFORD,
September 27, 1931

Mr. Gandhi began by accepting the Lancashire view that a part of the country's unemployment was caused by action taken by him in India. He admitted that a great many of the politically-minded in India took up the boycott in a spirit of revenge, and found pleasure in hitting England by it. It was not a matter of pleasure to him, and his arrest took the campaign in a rather different direction from what it might have done. Had the Government understood the strength behind his letter to Lord Irwin[2] laying down the famous eleven points, history might have been written differently. When he was arrested, the boycott became a universal cry. His own plan, Mr. Gandhi explained, would have been a boycott of foreign cloth, but the people took the law into their own hands, made the boycott one of British goods, and continued to buy Japanese cloth, American typewriters, and so on.

[1] The meeting was held in the morning at Heys Farm Guest House where the school was conducted and where Gandhiji stayed the night.

[2] Of March 2, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIII, pp. 2-8. The eleven points themselves, however, were mentioned in an article in the *Young India* January 30, 1931; *vide* Vol. XLII, p. 434.

When he was released in March[1], the boycott of British goods stopped, but that of foreign goods remained at hisinstance. Mr. Gandhi spoke of his negotiations with Lord Irwin on the boycotts of liquor and intoxicating drugs and foreign cloth, of Lord Irwin's anxiety to get the boycott on British cloth lifted, of the arguments used against this, and of Lord Irwin's final agreement that he would not endanger a settlement by insisting on the removal of the boycotts, which still remain.

As in his other statements, Mr. Gandhi compared the 3,000,000 British unemployed with India's 300,000,000. He spoke of doles as taking away self-respect, and described how, in conducting strikes in India, he had set his face against doles, and encouraged the strikers to find other employment—at much less wages—rather than be idle. He spoke of some strikers who had been taught to weave and make themselves independent.

Mr. Gandhi then went on to state his view that Indian poverty is the result of British policy—through the overthrowing of India's old cotton industry by the machines of Lancashire more than a hundred years ago. He argued that the descendants of those who destroyed the supplementary means of livelihood (which supplied the butter to the bread which the peasant earned from the soil) could not now complain if the descendants of the dispossessed tried to rehabilitate themselves.

He declared that it was an impossibility to seek to revive the Lancashire trade on its original foundations, and he could not lend a hand to the process. Equally he would not lift a finger to sustain the Indian mills. He might some time have to seek their destruction, but at present they did not interfere with the employment of the villagers, and he was tolerating them. He did not say to the villagers that they must buy indigenous mill-cloth; what he said to them was that they must not buy foreign cloth and that they must make their own cloth.

Mr. Gandhi described the conditions of the villagers, saying that 7s. 6d. was their average monthly income; the addition of 3s. would add a fortune, and those who had taken up the spinning-wheel were free from debt. He drew an idyllic picture of little children spinning while they were playing, and contrasted the life of the villagers who lived on a little bit of rice flung by insolent wealth with their position when the glorious work was done in their own homes. The only solace he could bring to Lancashire was that these teeming millions had no ill will to Lancashire, and did not know what Lancashire was. They had no clothing, but a little bit of rag.

This led Mr. Gandhi to explain his own choice of costume: he wished to appear as faithfully as could be as the representative of the teeming and naked millions. Even, he said, if he had to appear before the King he would be discourteous if he did not appear in his loin-cloth. He would

[1] Gandhiji was released in January; the boycott of British goods was stopped as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement. *Vide* Vol. XLV, Appendix VI.

consider himself indecent if he took a yard of cloth beyond the physical requirements of the teeming millions, whom he described as having but one meal, not knowing milk, and as sometimes being driven in the summer months to live on grass. These millions were knocking at our doors, and, in closing, Mr. Gandhi urged that England must not build her happiness on the tombs of millions, as she had done, he feared.

In the discussion Mr. Gandhi repeated his argument that the boycott may have been the last straw, but was only a contributory factor in Lancashire's loss of trade. He noted the other world causes of Lancashire's decline. He also repeated his suggestion that, assuming that there is a fair settlement with Great Britain, it is possible to have a contract with Lancashire on behalf of the Government for taking, on a decreasing scale from year to year, goods from Lancashire. This, he admitted, would simply tide over Lancashire's difficulty for a little time and no more.

Mr. Gandhi contested a suggestion that his policy is a dangerous form of nationalism. He gave the impression of desiring an India self-sufficing in food and clothing, but open to receive other kinds of goods from abroad. He left his hearers with some final words about Japanese business methods, and urged that it would be better for Lancashire to divert her attention from India and solve her problems in terms of the world crisis, in which the Indian contribution was only a speck on the screen.

The Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, 2-10-1931

51. *INTERVIEW TO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' DEPUTATION*[1]

West Bradford,
September 27, 1931

I would be untrue to you, I would be a false friend if I were not frank with you. . . . I strove with Lord Irwin last March for the liberty to boycott liquor and foreign cloth. He suggested that I might give up the boycott for three months as a gesture and then resume it. I said I could not give it up for three minutes. You have three million unemployed, but we have nearly three hundred million unemployed for half the year. Your average unemployment dole is 70 shillings. Our average income is 7 shillings and six pence a month. That operative was right in saying that he was falling in his own estimation. I do believe it is a debasing thing for a human being to remain idle and to live on doles. Whilst conducting a strike, I would not brook the

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report, "Gandhiji in Lancashire"

strikers remaining idle for a single day and got them to break the stones or carry sand and work in public streets asking my own co-workers to join them in that work. Imagine, therefore, what a calamity it must be to have 300 million unemployed, several millions becoming degraded every day for want of employment, devoid of self-respect, devoid of faith in God. I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them. It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter. Well, the peasants of India were getting their bread from their soil. I offered them the spinning-wheel in order that they may get butter, and if I appear today before the British public in my loin-cloth, it is because I have come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked dumb millions. We have prayed that we may bask in the presence of God's sunshine. I tell you it is impossible to do so whilst millions are knocking at your door. Even in your misery you are comparatively happy. I do not grudge you that happiness. I wish well to you, but do not think of prospering on the tombs of the poor millions of India. I do not want for India an isolated life at all, but I do not want to depend on any country for my food and clothing. Whilst we may devise means for tiding over the present crisis, I must tell you that you should cherish no hope of reviving the old Lancashire trade. It is impossible. I cannot religiously help in the process. . . .[1] Supposing, I have suddenly stopped breathing and I am helped by artificial respiration for a while and begin to breathe again, must I, for ever, depend on artificial respiration and refuse to use my own lungs again? No, it would be suicidal. I must try to strengthen my own lungs and live on my own resources. You must pray to God that India may strengthen her lungs. Do not attribute your misery to India. Think of the world forces that are powerfully working against you. See things in the daylight of reason.

Young India, 15-10-1931

[1] Omission as in the source

52. *STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*[1]

WEST BRADFORD,
September 27, 1931

I have certainly been very happy here and have experienced nothing but the greatest affection and kindness. I have seen various groups of operatives and employers, with whom I have had very friendly discussion.

I feel that I have learned something of the distress in Lancashire, and my heart has gone out to the suffering operatives. I saw Mr. Davies's mill and the whole shed in which the looms are lying idle. I have explained to him my personal position and that of the Congress. I have shown to him the limited extent to which help from India is possible in the event of a permanent settlement coming through. But I am also oppressed with the fact that unemployment is so widespread that the help that can possibly come from India will affect but a small class.

It has appeared to me that the cause of distress in Lancashire is more largely due to world causes than to the Indian boycott. Even before the Indian boycott came in its intense form last year, Lancashire's trade with India was not much over 15 per cent of the total production. I do not think it has been adversely affected by the boycott to more than 3 per cent, or it may be a little over.

The question, therefore, so far as India is concerned, is limited to a very small compass. It would be presumptuous for me to say what can be otherwise done in order to alleviate or entirely remove the present distress in Lancashire. And so far as India is concerned, I have already given you an idea of what is at the most possible. But whether something ultimately does or does not result, the two days of intimate contact with the employers and employed has shown me that the people of Lancashire have borne their distress very bravely, and it has been a matter of the keenest satisfaction to me that they have not shown any bitterness towards India, which I regard as a happy sign.

I had never expected anything but courteous treatment from the working people of Lancashire, but I was quite unprepared for the manifestation of deep affection that the crowds of people

[1] According to the source, Gandhiji received the party of Press reporters at noon.

lining the streets yesterday spontaneously showed to me. I shall ever treasure that affection as one of the pleasant recollections of my life.

That is all.

Asked if he was in a position to confirm a statement attributed to him that if India secured self-government, he would be agreeable to the prohibition of foreign imported cloths, with the exception of Lancashire goods, Mr. Gandhi said:

I would agree to the prohibition of all foreign cloths but Lancashire cloths, to the extent that foreign cloth was still necessary to supplement the Indian supply. Necessarily, there would have to be conditions about the standard of quality and of price, which, however, could be mutually arranged.

Asked if India's policy of manufacturing her own cotton goods would not affect her own exports of raw products, Mr. Gandhi said India would be buying from the other nations of the earth, or from England, under a favoured-nation clause, many things besides cotton piece-goods. He said:

India is not, and will not be for a long time to come, entirely self-contained for all her wants. For instance, India is at present importing large quantities of hardware, sugar, etc.

Q. Do you agree that a decline in imported goods would result in a corresponding decrease in the demand for Indian raw cotton?

A. Cotton is not such a special crop that once grown it must always be grown. The cultivator would immediately respond to changed conditions and grow other crops which are favourable.

Asked if he would specifically exclude Japanese cotton goods, Mr. Gandhi said:

I would put a prohibitive tariff upon Japanese piece-goods, also other piece-goods, and any other foreign goods. It would not be a question of discriminating against Japan. I have no complaint to make against her. I would simply take my goods from my partner. Japan or any other nation could not complain if I did not take their goods because I was manufacturing those goods myself, nor need they complain if I take them from my partner.

Q. All that depends on self-government?

A. Yes, it must be absolutely a free-will and voluntary thing. I would not be conferring a benefit on Lancashire at the expense of India. If I do need more foreign cloth, it would be foolish on my part not to take it from England, if England is my partner.

Q. Supposing these negotiations break down?

A. Then heaven help India! India must then go through the fire of suffering. There is no question of India finding her peace unless India finds also her freedom. That is a settled fact.

Asked if he was hopeful, Mr. Gandhi said:

It is in the hands of God. It is very difficult to say.

Q. Do you feel the prospects of a settlement are endangered by the political situation in England at the moment?

A. The prospects will be, or may be, endangered if British statesmen come to the conclusion that the settlement with India is not necessary in order to solve the present problem. If they feel it can be shunted—then there is danger. But if they feel that India is a factor in dealing with the domestic problem—then, of course, the Indian question retains the same importance, if it does not gain greater importance because of this domestic problem.

In response to an inquiry whether, if there is a General Election, he will wait until it finishes, Mr. Gandhi said:

I do not want to wait indefinitely here. It would be inconvenient for me to wait here marking time. If dissolution comes next week, my attitude would be determined by the attitude of the British Ministers as to what they want to do. If they want to mark time, to postpone the proceedings of the Conference, or to postpone effective decisions, I certainly would want to go away. Whether I returned for a resumption of the Conference depends on the situation that faces me at that time. I have certainly not calculated upon any postponement of the Conference, but I had calculated upon a final conclusion being reached.

Q. Do you think there has been progress or retrogression?

A. I don't think there has been any progress or retrogression.

Q. Do you look for progress?

A. That is a ticklish problem.

Q. Has Congress reached any conclusion?

A. Not any positive conclusion. It is difficult.

Q. Have you acquainted British Ministers with your plans in the event of a General Election being held?

A. I have no plans. I do not know what my plans will be.

In reply to a question respecting currency, Mr. Gandhi said he did not regard himself as an expert.

The Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, 2-10-1931

53. *INTERVIEW TO DEPUTATION*[1]

WEST BRADFORD,
September 27, 1931

Mr. Gandhi said he had no ill will either against Lancashire or England, and though he might claim to be the author of the boycott, the movement was not started in any spirit of bitterness whatever. He declared that the boycott was largely a policy of economy. His idea was not so much to boycott foreign cloth as to persuade the Indians to stop using machine-made cloth of any description. While recognizing that that was practically impossible of achievement, he wished to wean them as far as possible from buying machine-made cloth. Mr. Gandhi pointed out that, owing to the situation in India, for six months in the year the peasant was absolutely without work, for it was not possible to work on the land. Therefore, during that six months the peasant was on the verge of starvation. His idea was to occupy the interim period with weaving whereby the peasants could earn a little money. Thousands of Indians were therefore reverting to the spinning-wheel, and within the last year or so there were more than 100,000 peasants spinning or weaving cloth.

The Mahatma declared that politics had no charms for him. The only thing he had at heart was the moral welfare of his own class. From his own observations since coming to the country, he had realized that Lancashire was certainly suffering from the great trade depression. He wanted the people of Lancashire to understand that there were such things as comparisons in poverty, and that we were a long way above the poverty line prevalent in India. He stated that the income of all the people of India, including the millionaires, averaged at 7s 6d per month per Indian. From that it would be recognized how poor the poorest of the poor must be.

Mr. Brame asked if nothing could be done to alleviate both the suffering in Lancashire and in India.

Mr. Gandhi said if he could obtain satisfaction at the Round Table Conference, he would promise to do all he could to stop the import of cloth from Japan and Italy into India, and would allow Lancashire to have the first opportunity of providing the Indians with the deficiency between what they supplied themselves and the demand. He did not wish them to overlook

[1] Gandhiji received the deputation from the Clitheroe Weavers' Association in the afternoon. The deputation was led by H. L. Parkinson, the President, and G. Brame, the Secretary, and included four unemployed weavers.

the fact that Lancashire's trade with India must ever be a depreciating one.

The Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, 2-10-1931

54. *MYSELF, MY SPINNING-WHEEL AND WOMEN*[1]

What am I here for? What do I believe in? What is the India I would build? Well, before all else, I am here to uphold the truth as I see it, for I believe it is the keystone of life. On it everything else depends. It comes first and last and always. And in all things it is possible to put Truth first. For myself I have always tried to do it. In my political ambitions I eschew all lies and fraud. For the attainment of no object would I subscribe to deceit.

I have read many varying descriptions of myself. Some call me a saint. Others call me a rogue. I am neither the one nor the other. All that I aspire to be—and I hope I have in some measure succeeded in being—is an honest, godfearing man. But the things I read about myself do not annoy me. Why should they? I have my own philosophy and my work. Everyday I spin for a time. While I spin I think. I think of many things. But always from those thoughts I try to keep out bitterness.

Study this spinning-wheel of mine. It would teach you a great deal more than I can—patience, industry, simplicity. This spinning-wheel is for India's starving millions the symbol of salvation.

My Loin-cloth

My dress, which is described in the newspapers as a loin-cloth, is criticized, made fun of. I am asked why I wear it. Some seem to resent my wearing it.

When Englishmen visit India, do they forsake their European clothing and adopt our Eastern dress, which is much more suitable to the climate? No. And there is the answer to those who ask why in England I wear the dress to which I am accustomed, the dress of India.

If I came here to live and work as an English citizen, then I should conform to the customs of the country and should wear the dress of an Englishman. But I am here on a great and special mission, and my loin-cloth, if you choose so to describe it, is the dress of my principals, the people of India. Into my keep-

[1] The title supplied by *The Daily Herald* for which Gandhiji wrote this exclusive article.

ing a sacred trust has been put. A special duty has been given me to perform. I must, therefore, wear the symbol of my mission. I find these different descriptions of me interesting—sometimes amusing—but I am just a representative of my people, endeavouring to fulfil the task they have entrusted to me.

Yes, I believe in complete equality for women and, in the India I seek to build, they would have it. The reason I have so many women co-workers is, I believe, due to my adoption of celibacy and my instinctive sympathy for women.

You have probably heard that in my country women occupy a subordinate position. This is only so outwardly. Actually, their influence has ever been of the strongest. For centuries women have worked on an equal footing with men. If they ceased work, then many of the men would starve.

PLAYTHINGS

In the cultivation of the crops our men and women toil together. Their life is a strenuous one. It is in the leisured classes that the difference is more marked. Wealth has enabled women to forget and set aside the virtue of usefulness. Thus there is a tendency for wealthy women to become mere ornaments—playthings.

What I want to see is the opening of all offices, professions and employments to women; otherwise there can be no real equality. But I most sincerely hope that woman will retain and exercise her ancient prerogative as queen of the household.

From this position she must never be dethroned. It would indeed be a dreary home of which a woman was not the centre. I cannot, for instance, imagine a really happy home in which the wife is a typist and scarcely ever in it. Who would look after the children? What, after all, is a home without children, the brightest jewels in the poorest household?

FAMILY FIRST

Cases might be cited in which a clever woman might, by going out into the world to earn her living, make more money and do more for the children, paying someone to look after them. Exceptional women make necessarily exceptional cases. There are exceptions in every phase of life, but we cannot generalize from exceptions.

Generally, it is the father who should be the bread-winner. He will work all the better, knowing that he has a happy home. And it is a serious injustice to deprive a child of the tender care which only a mother can give.

It is a woman's work to bring up her little ones and mould their character. A precious work, too. Equality in status with men,



WITH TEXTILE WORKERS, LANCASHIRE



I desire for women, but if the mother fails in her sacred trust towards her children, then nothing can atone for the loss.

Whatever the race, family life is the first and greatest thing. Its sanctity must remain. Upon it rests the welfare of the nation. For good or for ill home influence persists. Of that there can be no possible doubt, and no State can survive unless the sacred security of its home life is preserved. Individuals there may be who in pursuit of some great principle or ideal, forgo, like myself, the solace of family life, choosing instead one of self-sacrifice and celibacy; but for the mass of the people the preservation of home life is essential.

The Daily Herald, 28-9-1931

55. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 28, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

Enclosed you will find copies of three cables[1] that I found awaiting me on my return from Lancashire this morning. They illustrate what I tried to explain the other day.

You will find in the cables mention of Mr. Birla's name. He is well versed in matters of finance. I would suggest a meeting between Sir Henry Strakosch and Mr. Birla and other Indians versed in currency questions.[2]

If the Government of India have a good case, I should imagine that they should have no difficulty in satisfying these Indian experts.

Mr. Vallabhbhai is Sardar Patel, President of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. 3

THE RIGHT HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE

From a photostat: S.N. 17869

[1] The cables including those from Vallabhbhai Patel and Federation of Bombay Commercial Associations had protested against the Ordinance linking the rupee with sterling and fixing its value at 18 pence, a measure calculated to dissipate India's slender gold reserves.

[2] Strakosch, replying to Gandhiji's letter to him (the following item), said he would welcome the opportunity to see Birla. The meeting took place on October 6.

56. LETTER TO SIR HENRY STRAKOSCH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W. 1,
September 28, 1931

DEAR SIR HENRY,

I enclose herewith copies of cables received from India. You will now appreciate my difficulty in forming a judgment.

Will you please restate, if you can, your argument in the light of these cables? I would study it and then seek an interview with you for fuller information and instruction.

Yours sincerely,

SIR HENRY STRAKOSCH, K.C.B.

From a photostat: S.N. 17868

57. LETTER TO TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

September 28, 1931

DEAR DR. SAPRU,

I send you copies of three cables just received. On the strength of these cables, I have sent a letter to the Secretary of State.[1] I enclose herewith copy of that letter too. I would suggest your discussing the question with Mr. Birla or Prof. Shah or both and form an opinion and perhaps support my letter to the S. of S.

May I ask you to share this letter with Sastri and Mr. Jayakar?

Rungasamy told me that you felt that I was not keeping in touch with you. Please consider me to be at your beck and call. It would be a pleasure to me to share with you my thoughts if I knew that you would care to know them. What I have felt is that, in many vital matters, I must not count upon your support. Nothing would please me more than to know that I was mistaken in so thinking. Add to this belief my retiring nature and you have the whole reason for my apparent aloofness.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. 3

From a photostat: S.N. 17867

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Sir Samuel Hoare", p. 81.

58. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

LONDON,
September 28, 1931

We had a hearty discussion for two and a half hours. There is no deadlock; but it is too early yet to say what the result of the conference may be, or whether the conversations may be continued later.

The Daily Telegraph, 29-9-1931

59. LETTER TO H. HARCOURT

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[2] My time-table is packed; I cannot therefore send you an early appointment. If you could call at 88 Knightsbridge on 13th October at 9.30, I should be delighted to meet you.

Yours sincerely,

H. HARCOURT, ESQ.
119 GIPSY HILL
UPPER NORWOOD, S.E. 19

From a photostat: S.N. 17824

[1] Gandhiji issued the statement after his meeting with the Aga Khan at the Ritz Hotel in the evening. No report of the discussion is available.

[2] The addressee had served in India as a district officer and on retirement had written a book on India. He had asked for an appointment with Gandhiji.

60. LETTER TO SHAW DESMOND

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W. 1,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your very warm letter.[1] If you could conveniently come to 88 Knightsbridge at . . .[2] I would be glad to see you.

Yours sincerely,

SHAW DESMOND, ESQ.
LEICESTER HOUSE
MONTPELLIER ROW
TWICKENHAM

From a photostat: S.N. 17882

61. LETTER TO A. FENNER BROCKWAY

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR MR. FENNER BROCKWAY,

I have your letter of the 18th inst. I already gave one message to the *Irish Free Press.*

I had also the pleasure of seeing Mr. Valera's Secretary. Will your friend Mr. Fox want a message?[3] I am practically drained dry.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 17880

[1] The addressee, a well known Irish journalist and poet, had said, he no longer believed that India was ready for independence. He had asked for an appointment to see Gandhiji.

[2] This is left blank in the source.

[3] Brockway had said in his letter that Fox was a friend of his, working on the staff of *Irish Free Press,* and that he had asked if Gandhiji would give a message for the paper.

62. LETTER TO H. STANLEY JEVONS

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to receive your letter.[1] Please come whenever you have the time, but I would suggest that you telephone (SLOANE 4232) to ask whether I should be here at the time you would reach here. My time-table is so packed that I am not sending you an appointment. Nevertheless I should like to see you if it is at all possible. The meeting address is at 88 Knightsbridge.

Yours sincerely,

H. STANLEY JEVONS, ESQ.
11 RUSSELL SQUARE MANSIONS
122 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C. 1

From a photostat: S.N. 17886

63. LETTER TO FREDERICK B. FISHER[2]

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was deeply touched by your prayerful greetings. My message to American Christians on World Peace and Disarmament is that Peace and Disarmament are not a matter of reciprocity. When real Peace and Disarmament come, they will be initiated by a strong nation like America—irrespective of the consent and co-operation of other nations.

[1] The addressee, a retired professor of economics, had expressed a desire to meet Gandhiji.

[2] American Methodist Episcopal Churchman, author of *That Strange Little Brown Man—Gandhi*. He was a bishop and lived in Calcutta from 1920 to 1930. He had asked for a message to American Christians.

An individual or a nation must have faith in oneself and in the protective power of God to find peace in the midst of strife, and to shed all arms by reason of feeling the loving power of God and His protective shield, and I hold such peace to be impossible so long as strong nations do not consider it to be sinful to exploit weak nations.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP FISHER
C/o *Christian Herald*
NEW YORK

From a facsimile of the original in *That Strange Little Brown Man–Gandhi*; also S.N. 17872

64. LETTER TO EVELYN CLARE[1]

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of the 24th inst. for which I thank you.

I would love to attend your Society's lunch or dinner, if only in order to revive old memories. I would, however, like you to tell me the approximate dates that you want, and the time the whole function is likely to occupy.

Yours sincerely,

MISS EVELYN CLARE
THE FRUITARIAN SOCIETY
DODDINGTON, KENT

From a photostat: S.N. 17837

[1] Honorary Secretary of the Fruitarian Society

65. *LETTER TO A. FENNER BROCKWAY*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR MR. FENNER BROCKWAY,

I thank you for your letter enclosing manifesto[1] about the Meerut prisoners. I have tried in my own manner and propose to do so here, but I feel I should be excused from having to sign the manifesto. First, because it may damage the cause which you and I want to espouse.

Secondly, because I could not wholly subscribe to all the statements made to [*sic*] you.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 17877

[1] This was in the form of a mass petition and read: "We, the undersigned, emphatically protest against the arrest and the continued imprisonment of those who are now being tried at Meerut, India, on the charge of conspiracy against the King.

"We recognize that these 31 political prisoners were arrested in March, 1929, because they led the revolt of the Indian workers against the intolerable conditions of employment which exist, and were successfully building trade union organizations which were a real challenge both to British Imperialism and to the Indian exploiters.

"These prisoners have been detained on trial for over two years; some hundreds of witnesses have been called, and many thousands of pounds have been spent by the Government on the prosecution of these heroic standard-bearers of the working class.

"Not only do we demand their unconditional and immediate release, but we further demand the immediate release of the Garhwali Riflemen who gallantly refused to fire on an unarmed gathering of their fellow-countrymen, and as a consequence have been sentenced to lifelong terms of imprisonment". (S.N. 17840). The addressee had asked Gandhiji to consider whether he could sign it.

66. LETTER TO MRS. G. HAINES

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

It was good of you to have written to me and shown so much care for my health.

You will be glad to know that, though I do not take orange juice and honey mixed together,[1] I do take three oranges per day and, early in the morning, honey and a little lemon juice added to it.

Yours sincerely,

MRS. G. HAINES
ABBOTSFORD
10 MARKET PLACE
WARWICK

From a photostat: S.N. 17883

67. LETTER TO S. S. ZAHEER[2]

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W. 1,
September 29, 1931

MY DEAR ZAHEER,

Why do you want me to give you a separate appointment? Will you not be meeting me at one of the students' meetings? I want these meetings to be meetings where you ask me all the questions you like. This arrangement will serve a useful purpose and save me so very much time.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 17874

[1] The addressee, a nurse, had suggested to Gandhiji that he should take "some orange juice and honey every day".

[2] The addressee had, on behalf of some Indian students who did not subscribe to Gandhiji's political or social ideas, asked for an appointment.

68. *LETTER TO DR. KRISTIAN SCHJELDERUP*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 21st inst. I do not know if Norway is abandoned altogether.

In any case you will please forgive me for not writing you the article you want;[1] I have not a moment to spare. If I do not come at all to Norway, you will perhaps write to me again and I might be able to write you something.

Yours sincerely,

DR. KRISTIAN SCHJELDERUP
THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
NORWAY

From a photostat: S.N. 17810

69. *LETTER TO J. THEODORE HARRIS*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Mr. Alexander[2] has handed your letter to me. I am looking forward to meeting Dr. Montessori[3] on Wednesday next. I shall wait for her if she is not here at 10 o'clock punctually.

Yours sincerely,

J. THEODORE HARRIS, ESQ.
4 GRAHAM ROAD, E. 8

From a photostat: S.N. 17873

[1] The addressee had requested Gandhiji to give his opinion on "The Message of Jesus Christ to the Men of Today" for the journal *Fritt Ord.*

[2] Horace Alexander

[3] Dr. Maria Montessori, the educationist; for a report of their meeting, *vide* p. 128.

70. LETTER TO R. B. GREGG

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

MY DEAR GOVIND,

I have your letter of the 27th July last.[1] Of course if I could persuade India to revert to methods of barter, it would be a capital thing, but I do not think I would get any response just now. There are, however, many things possible in that direction and these are being tried.

As I am dictating this letter against time, I am not going into details.

You see I am dictating this in London. I came because I felt that it was a clear call from God, and if I could describe to you in detail how I was led to London, even you would be surprised—how it all happened when it seemed to have utterly broken down. I was packing to go away to the Ashram and I packed inside of half-an-hour to entrain by the Special taking me to the ship that brought me here.

You will like to know that I have already seen Prof. Laski; I am in close touch with him.

Don't think that Malaviyaji and Mrs. Naidu have come here over the heads of the Congress. They have come because they have

[1] It said: " . . . Recently I have wondered whether, after India gets her freedom it might not be a great relief to the peasantry to let them pay their taxes in the form of a percentage of their crops, as was done centuries ago. . . . Recently I talked with an English friend of mine who used to be a teacher at Harvard College. . . . his name is H. J. Laski. He told me that he was Mr. Justice Sankey's chief secretarial assistant at the first Round Table Conference. . . . Apparently he has hypnotized himself into thinking that the financial safeguards there proposed would work out to be entirely in Indian control, though how any honest Englishman with a knowledge of Magna Carta could think so is beyond my comprehension. . . . And now that the Government have put Malaviyaji upon the list of delegates, I think the British Government believe that Malaviyaji has more influence with you than any other Indian who is pliable to them, and so they will work on you through Irwin on one side and Malaviyaji on the other. . . . Those two men, as men, may be wholly sincere but I do not think they know the falsities and horrors of the system they are trying to preserve. . . ." (S. N. 17394)

an independent status and they have come with the consent of the Congress. The Congress could have put them on the Deputation, but the decision to make me sole agent of the Congress was arrived at after the fullest consideration and there were so many reasons for that decision that on no account could it be changed.

I have no time to give you an account of the doings here. Most of what is happening you get through the newspapers; the rest you will get from Mahadev or Pyarelal, or Devdas or Mira if she gets the time.

With love to you all,

Yours affectionately,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 4665; also S.N. 17876

71. *LETTER TO JULIET E. BLUME*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 13th inst. I think the meaning of Dominion Status you have quoted is admirable.[1] What, however, the Indian National Congress is aiming at, is a Partnership or Alliance. Dominions are generally English speaking peoples, or they are otherwise called "daughter nations". India is in that sense an alien nation, therefore she can only be legitimately a partner or an ally.

The statement attributed to me and quoted by you[2] is the opposite of what I have repeated from thousands of platforms. Non-violence is an absolute creed. I could not therefore have said

[1] The addressee, a senior at Barnard College, Columbia University, had quoted Lord Balfour's definition of Dominion Status as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, and in no way subordinate, one to the other, in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". She had asked Gandhiji to give his own definition of the concept.

[2] It read: "Three hundred and sixty million people without liberty cannot remain in the leashes of non-violence for ever." *Vide* Vol. XLVII, "Interview to the Associated Press", 11-9-1931.

anything that could detract in any way from the value of that creed. Violence is excluded by the Congress voluntarily, because the Congress has come to the conclusion that it is the right thing, but the mere fact of England and India being members of the League of Nations surely does not exclude the possibility of violence if either nation is minded to offer violence—England in order to retain her hold on India, and India in order to get out of that hold. Even as it is, today India is only nominally a member of the League; she is not a member in her own right, but she is a member under English patronage and at the will of Great Britain.

Yours sincerely,

MISS JULIET E. BLUME
771 WEST END AVENUE
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

From a photostat: S.N. 17878

72. *LETTER TO V. G. KURMA*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[1] My time-table is so crowded I dare not give you a fixed appointment. If you would come to 88 Knightsbridge some day at 10 a.m., I would try and give you just a few minutes.

I would like you to prepare notes of all you would have me to know. I shall undertake to study your notes and see you again if I find it necessary to discuss any of the points raised therein.

Yours sincerely,

V. G. KURMA, ESQ.
RAGLAN HOTEL
UPPER BEDFORD PLACE, W.C. 1

From a photostat: S.N. 17885

[1] The addressee, who had been Private Secretary to the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa, had said he had a message for Gandhiji from the South African Indian Congress and asked for an appointment.

73. LETTER TO H. C. DHANDA

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

MY DEAR DHANDA,

I have been waiting for a letter all these days.[1] Do please come whenever you like and look me up at 88 Knightsbridge. Take away an appointment for some time during the day if I am absent or busy at the time you call.

Yours sincerely,

H. C. DHANDA, ESQ.
86 VICTORIA ROAD
OXFORD

From a photostat: S.N. 17881

74. LETTER TO ARTHUR HARRISON

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[2] I could give you a few minutes if you could come to 88 Knightsbridge, on . . .[3]

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR HARRISON, ESQ.
BROTHERHOOD OF THE WAY HOUSE
61 HUGH STREET, S.W.1

From a photostat: S.N. 17825

[1] The addressee was the son of Lala Dunichand, who, according to the addressee's letter of September 24, had probably written to Gandhiji about him.

[2] The addressee was associated with a movement called the Brotherhood of the Way, based on the Sermon on the Mount. He had asked Gandhiji for an appointment.

[3] This is left blank in the source.

75. LETTER TO SIR HENRY STRAKOSCH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 30, 1931

DEAR SIR HENRY,

I thank you for your letter. I would gladly be present at the forthcoming discussions between yourself and Mr. Birla. Will Saturday next at 11 o'clock suit you? Upon hearing from you, I will advise Mr. Birla of the appointment.

Yours sincerely,

SIR HENRY STRAKOSCH, K.C.B.

From a photostat: S.N. 17887

76. LETTER TO S. N. HAJI

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.E.,
September 30, 1931

MY DEAR HAJI,

I thank you for your letter. I am glad you sent me your note on the definition of the word 'citizen'[1]. It will prove useful to me.

Yours sincerely,

S. N. HAJI, ESQ.
RANGOON

From a microfilm: S.N. 17679

[1] The addressee had taken exception to T. B. Sapru's suggestion at the Round Table Conference that the term 'Indian Citizen' might be defined to include the British in India, saying that in that way any British subject "whether a Britisher, a South African, a Canadian or an Australian would come to possess. . . . rights equal to those enjoyed by Indians born in India". He had suggested that citizenship should be so defined "as to exclude the citizens of what we may call the Anti-Indian Colonies. . . ."

77. LETTER TO PASTOR FORELL

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
September 30, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your telegram[1] advising me of Sundaram's address on the Indian movement, and for your sympathies and prayers for the success of my mission.

Yours sincerely,

HERR PASTOR FORELL
SWEDISH CHURCH
BERLIN

From a photostat: S.N. 17898

78. LETTER TO DR. MAUDE ROYDEN

LONDON,
September 30, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. It was a privilege to meet you and speak to your congregation[2]. Your people did give the donation to me and if I transfer the collection to you, why should you be troubled? I could not have made better use of the gift.[3]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Guildhouse, November 1931

[1] This said: "Swedish friends of India, assembled last night to hear brother Sundaram's address on Gandhiji's movement send their sympathies and prayers for success your mission." The addressee presided at the gathering. (S.N. 17846)

[2] *Vide* pp. 50-8.

[3] Gandhiji had desired that the collection be used for work among the unemployed.

79. *INTERVIEW WITH RAMSAY MACDONALD*[1]

LONDON,
September 30, 1931

Gandhi showed no sign of any intention to break up the Conference. What he complained of was that the Conference was futile because the other delegates were only the nominees of Government and he was the sole genuine representative of the people. He thought that he could represent the Muslims and the Depressed Classes better than those who purported to do so. He and the British Government could settle the whole question if he was treated as representing everybody. The Prime Minister said that the Conference had at any rate been successful in so far as it had got Gandhi to come to London and brought him into touch with the Government; and he countered by telling Gandhi that the civil disobedience movement was a mistake and only hindered the British Government from carrying out their intentions towards India.

From a photostat: C.W. 9381. Courtesy: India Office Library

80. *SPEECH AT INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE*[2]

LONDON,
September 30, 1931

Gandhiji said he was well aware of the sacrifices made by the merchants of India in national interests, but, much as they had done, still more was expected by the nation. Paying a tribute to Dadabhoy Naoroji and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Gandhiji said those great leaders recognized that, unless the merchant princes in India identified themselves with the Congress activities, progress towards freedom would be delayed.

Gandhiji proceeded to criticize the financial manipulation undertaken by the Government of India at the dictation of the Secretary of State over the heads of those who knew what India wanted and said:

I share your fear that, at this time, when we are led to expect a transfer of power to ourselves, there does not after all appear to be much of a change at the headquarters. I am afraid power

[1] Except for this official note no other report of the interview is available.
[2] The Indian Chamber of Commerce had arranged a reception in honour of Gandhiji at Hotel Metropole.

is not going to descend on us suddenly, but if really great changes are contemplated by His Majesty's advisers, we should have a foretaste in matters like this.

The Congress came deliberately to the conclusion that, without absolute control of the finances, no self-government could possibly meet the nation's needs. Part of the mandate given me was that Independence was meaningless unless accompanied by complete control of defence, external affairs and finance. I cannot conceive of any government, which can be called responsible, which does not exercise those rights.

He assured British firms trading in India that, where their interests were legitimately and justly acquired and not conflicting with the vital interests of the masses, they need have no fear from the National Government.

No safeguard can possibly equal India's goodwill. Nobody who wishes to remain in India when she has acquired full freedom can come to harm if he depends upon goodwill, without which other safeguards, however carefully worded, would not be worth the paper on which they were written. Such safeguards would be a hindrance rather than a help in the solution of the great problem to which the delegates are applying their minds.

Regarding the communal question, where the position was admittedly serious, Gandhiji said the Congress had laid down its own policy in the clearest possible terms in the Lahore resolution, supplemented by the Working Committee.[1]

I can only add a personal assurance that, so far as humanly possible, I shall leave no stone unturned to reach a solution, but I cannot conceal from you that I find myself confronted with the greatest difficulties. I can only seek your prayerful assistance and whatever influence you can exert upon the different communities.

The Hindu, 1-10-1931

[1] The reference is to the resolution adopted at the Lahore Session of the Congress in January 1930 (*Vide* Vol. XLII, p. 359.) and to that of the Working Committee adopted duiring its meeting in Bombay from July 7 to 13, 1931 (*vide* Vol. XLVII, pp. 140-1.).

81. LETTER TO ARTHUR J. DAVIS

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W. 1,
October 1, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Thank you for your letter.[1] Here is my message:

"It was a brave step, worthy of America, to have undertaken the most difficult task for her of total prohibition. It would be a shame and a rude shock to reformers throughout the world if for any cause America abandoned the policy and returned to the drink evil."

Yours sincerely,

MR. ARTHUR J. DAVIS
THE MASSACHUSETTS ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE
345 TREMONT BUILDING
73 TREMONT STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

From a photostat: S.N. 17808

82. LETTER TO UJJAL SINGH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 1, 1931

DEAR SARDAR UJJAL SINGH,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your letter of the 30th ult.

It is quite correct that I have personally said that I would give a blank cheque to the Mussalmans regarding their demands, but such a statement has added to it a similar assurance to the Sikhs; and for that matter all other communities.

[1] In his letter of September 21 the addressee had said: "You can perform a great service if you will send us a word of encouragement and greeting to be read . . . at an all-day State-wide conference on temperance and total abstinence which is to be held . . . on October 16th. America is in the throes of a desperate drive of the liquor interests to restore beer, and thus to re-establish the old evils which we fought so long and so successfully."

It has been a belief of a lifetime with me that he who will serve the national cause should demand no rights and make room for rights for those who demand rights, but I never meant that the blank cheque to the Mussalmans shoud mean a neglect, wholly or partially, of Sikhs or any other just claims.

Yours sincerely,

SARDAR UJJAL SINGH
ST. JAMES' COURT
BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W. 1

From a photostat: S.N. 17925

83. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

We have decided to ask for an adjournment for another week of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference.

These conversations will continue during the next week. There is no deadlock. Nothing is settled. I am neither happy nor unhappy about the position. My conversation with the Prime Minister had nothing to do with the Communal question.

The News Chronicle, 1-10-1931

84. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
October 1, 1931

At this distance it is difficult to understand the implications of the budget, but I am horrified that the poor man's salt has also come in for increased taxation. I know the Congress will fight this also. The remedy for balancing the budget does not lie through increased taxation, but through radical retrenchment in both military and civil expenditure. I tender congratulations to H.E. the Viceroy for having voluntarily accepted a cut in his salary, but I cannot escape the feeling that reduction must be on a grand scale if India is to share in real self-government.

The Hindu, 1-10-1931, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2-10-1931

[1] Gandhiji made the statement at the end of a two-and-a-half hour meeting with the Aga Khan and other Muslim leaders at the Ritz Hotel.

85. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

LONDON,
October 1, 1931

Mr. Gandhi said that the money would be devoted to the constructive work of the Congress. Millions of Indians were so sunk in poverty that it was almost impossible to inspire them with any hope of earning their own livelihood and the task of the Congress was formidable. If he could persuade the people to become self-sufficient in respect of the second necessity of life, namely, clothing, they would have a real swaraj.[2]

(1) Complete Independence is the present objective of the Congress. My mission here is to ask for immediate independence, but that does not exclude partnership with Britain on absolutely equal terms to be terminated at will. I would consider that complete independence.

(2) What the Congress meant (by the Lahore resolution) was severance from the British Empire which is not the same thing as severance of even honourable partnership with Great Britain. India will not belong to an Empire if it means that India becomes a subject nation, but India will be an honourable partner with Great Britain if both India and Great Britain so desire.

That India desires it is plain from the fact that I have come here to ask for Complete Independence, not excluding the idea of partnership if it is equally desired by Great Britain.

(3) The Independence Section is represented by me on behalf of the Congress.

(4) The Indian States' subjects are not being represented by representatives appointed or elected by them. I have a mission on behalf of these subjects of Indian States which I hope to fulfil according to my lights and my ability.

(5) I must say that I do not consider myself to be quite so simple as to imagine that I can get independence for India by entering into a bargain of such an insignificant character compared with what I seek.

[1] At a reception given to Gandhiji by the Indian community at Guildhouse on the eve of his birthday. Vithalbhai Patel presided. A purse of £ 575 was presented to Gandhiji.

[2] The report of Gandhiji's answers which follows is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30-10-1931.

My offer of preference for British cloth to other foreign cloths is based upon its own merits and the merits are these: that if I have Great Britain as my partner, even as I would prefer Indian cloth to any other cloth so would I prefer the cloth produced by my partner to that produced by those who are not my partners.

(6) I propose to devote all my energies, when the question of franchise comes up before the Federal Structure Committee, to making good the point that I have adumbrated, i.e., showing that adult suffrage is an immediate possibility through the method that I have planned.

I am not able to say with absolute certainty that the whole of the Working Committee shares my views but it comes under the powers given to me by the Working Committee that I may use my discretion in the method of reaching adult suffrage.

My hands are tied so far as adult suffrage is concerned; they are not tied in so far as the methods are concerned. There are some members of the Working Committee who do not actually know what I mean by the method.

(7) I have already placed before the Government the written mandate of the Congress which embodies the whole of its demands without reservation whatsoever.

The Government has not yet laid its cards upon the table, but the time is fast coming when the Government's policy will also have to be declared one way or the other because I expect that all the members of the Round Table Conference, busy as they are, are not going to give up the whole of their time here in idle expectation of something turning up on the morrow.

I have definite instructions not to idle my time here. Therefore, as soon as I find that I cannot usefully remain here, I shall have to return to India.

(8) The Garhwali prisoners (as they are called) deliberately disobeyed their orders. I agree that it was a non-violent action on their part, but it was also a gross breach of discipline by those who had taken an oath to carry out the commands of their officers.

So long as the present Government remains, however, I have not the heart to go to them to say you must release them. I can say: your punishment is too heavy for the crime.

After all, they thought the orders were mischievous. They might have been satisfied with the right punishment.

I am not going at this stage to confer with the Government about this thing. If I get the thing for which I have been sent here, I can do this thing, but otherwise it is [not] in conflict with the

conduct of the campaign itself that some men may suffer imprisonment, even life servitude.

(9) Please understand that I have tried my level best in the manner that I know is consistent with the dignity of the nation in connection with the Meerut prisoners.

I will not fail in my duty whenever I can put in a word for them.[1]

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-10-1931, and 30-10-1931

86. EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF MINORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
October 1, 1931

MR. GANDHI: Prime Minister, after consultation with His Highness the Aga Khan and other Muslim friends last night, we came to the conclusion that the purpose for which we meet here would be better served if a week's adjournment was asked for. I have not had the opportunity of consulting my other colleagues, but I have no doubt that they will also agree to the proposal I am making. I have been having with my Muslim friends anxious conversations, and I had the pleasure of meeting some other friends also, last afternoon, belonging to the different groups or classes. We were not able to make much headway, but they too felt that the time at our disposal was too short even for exchanging views. I may say for myself that beyond this week's adjournment I would not press for any further adjournment, but I would report to this Committee what has been the result of the endeavour I shall be making during the week.

I let out no secret when I inform this Committee that His Highness and the other friends with whom I was closeted last night laid upon my shoulders the burden of calling representatives of the different groups together and holding consultations with a view to arriving at some final settlement. If this proposal of mine commends itself to you, Prime Minister, and to the rest of the members of this Committee, I shall be glad. I know that His Highness will second this proposal, and let us all hope that, at the end of the week, it will be possible to report some sort of a settlement.

[1] According to a Reuter report, towards the end of the meeting, some Indian communists caused "pandemonium" resulting in their forcible ejection.

When I express this hope, I do not wish to convey any impression that, because I express it, there is something that I know and on which I am building that hope. But I am an irrepressible optimist, and often in my lifetime when the horizon has appeared to be the blackest, some turn has taken place which has given good ground for hope. Whatever it may be, so far as human endeavour is possible, all that endeavour will be made, I have no doubt, by many members of this Committee to arrive at a settlement.

With these words I leave my proposal, that we adjourn our proceedings to this day week, in your hands for consideration.

H.H. THE AGA KHAN: I have pleasure in seconding the proposal.

SARDAR UJJAL SINGH: I rise to give my whole-hearted support to this proposal, and I share the hope that by this means we may come to some understanding, given goodwill on both sides.

DR. AMBEDKAR: I do not wish to create any difficulty in our making every possible attempt to arrive at some solution of the problem with which this Committee has to deal, and if a solution can be arrived at by the means suggested by Mahatma Gandhi, I, for one, will have no objection to that proposal.

But there is just this one difficulty with which I, as representing the Depressed Classes, am faced. I do not know what sort of committee Mahatma Gandhi proposes to appoint to consider this question during the period of adjournment, but I suppose that the Depressed Casses will be represented on this Committee.

MR. GANDHI: Without doubt. . . .[1]

Prime Minister and friends, I see that there is some kind of misunderstanding with reference to the scope of the work that some of us have set before ourselves. I fear that Dr. Ambedkar, Colonel Gidney and other friends are unnecessarily nervous about what is going to happen. Who am I to deny political status to any single interest or class or even individual in India? As a representative of the Congress I should be unworthy of the trust that has been reposed in me by the Congress if I were guilty of sacrificing a single national interest. I have undoubtedly given expression to my own views on these points. I must confess that

[1] All the speakers that followed generally supported the adjournment motion, but Dr. Ambedkar, Sir Henry Gidney and Rao Bahadur Pannirselvam, though they did not oppose the adjournment, said that since Gandhiji recognized only two minority communities, namely, the Muslims and the Sikhs, they did not see how they could participate in the work of the committee which Gandhiji proposed to form for the purpose of unofficial consultations.

I hold to those views also. But there are ways and ways of guaranteeing protection to every single interest. It will be for those of us who will be putting our heads together to try to evolve a scheme. Nobody would be hampered in pressing his own views on the members of this very informal conference or meeting. We need not call it a committee. I have no authority to convene any committee or to bring into being a committee. I can only act as a humble messenger of peace, try to get together representatives of different interests and groups, and see whether, by being closeted in one room and by heart-to-heart conversation, we may not be able to remove cobwebs of misunderstanding and see our way clear to the goal that lies so hazily before us today.

I do not think, therefore, that anybody need be afraid as to being able to express his opinion or carrying his opinion also. Mine will be there equal to that of everyone of us; it will carry no greater weight; I have no authority behind me to carry my opinion against the opinion of anybody. I have simply given expression to my views in the national interest, and I shall give expression to these views whenever they are opportune. It will be for you, it is for you to reject or accept those opinions. Therefore please disabuse your minds, everyone of us, of the idea that there is going to be any steam-rolling in the Conference and the informal meetings that I have adumbrated. But if you think that this is one way of coming closer together than by sitting stiffly at this table, you will not only carry this adjournment motion, but give your whole-hearted co-operation to the proposal that I have made in connection with these informal meetings.[1]

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, pp. 528-9

87. NOTE FOR EVELYN CLARE

[After *October 1, 1931*][2]

1.15 30th Oct. Do not take more than 1½ hours.

From a photostat: S.N. 17927

[1] The motion was put to vote by the chairman and was carried.

[2] This note was made by Gandhiji on a letter dated October 1, 1931 from the addressee inviting him to lunch at a meeting of the Fruitarian Society, Doddington, Kent. The meeting according to a further letter from Clare was to be held at Grosvenor House Hotel, London.

88. INTERVIEW TO "THE JEWISH CHRONICLE"

LONDON,
[Before *October 2, 1931*]

I have a world of friends among the Jews. In South Africa I was surrounded by Jews, and I have had a Jewish shorthand writer and typist who was regarded more as a member of the family.

I cannot, however, say that I have made a proper study of the Jewish religion, but I have studied as much as a layman can. I think the Jewish religion is a very fine religion, being so closely allied to Christianity in many respects. For example, the Prophets of the Old Testament are all Jews, and Jesus himself was a Jew.

I visited the Synagogue at Johannesburg during the Festival of the Passover, and you can almost say I was keeping the Passover with my Jewish friends, because I went to their house every night and I heartily enjoyed, what do you call them now?

"*Matzos*", interjected our representative.

Yes, *matzos*. I think *matzos* are very nice and crisp.

I have, however, attended two or three Jewish services, which I think are very impressive; but my own feeling is that "the heart was lacking". That is to say, the spirit was lacking. They were too ceremonial, although I must say the ceremony was very nice. The Jewish Rabbi was a celebrated scholar, and he delivered a learned discourse, but it did not touch my heart.

My attitude towards Jews is one of great sympathy. I am very much attracted to the Jews, firstly, because of selfish motives, since I have very many Jewish friends; secondly, for a far deeper one—they have got a wonderful spirit of cohesion. That is to say, wherever you find Jews there is a spirit of comradeship among them. Moreover, they are a people with a vision. The implication and full meaning of that vision, if I may put it without impertinence, they do not themselves realize.

I am sometimes asked whether I regard Jews as the Chosen People, and I say, well, in a sense, yes. But then all peoples consider themselves to be chosen.

Zionism in its spiritual sense is a lofty aspiration. By spiritual sense I mean they should want to realize the Jerusalem that is

within. Zionism meaning reoccupation of Palestine has no attraction for me. I can understand the longing of a Jew to return to Palestine, and he can do so if he can without the help of bayonets, whether his own or those of Britain. In that event he would go to Palestine peacefully and in perfect friendliness with the Arabs. The real Zionism of which I have given you my meaning is the thing to strive for, long for and die for. Zion lies in one's heart. It is the abode of God. The real Jerusalem is the spiritual Jerusalem. Thus he can realize this Zionism in any part of the world.

Mr. Gandhi added that unfortunately he had not been to Palestine yet but that he hoped to go there some day.

I should love to go, for I have read so much about the Holy Land. Anti-Semitism is really a remnant of barbarism. I have never been able to understand this antipathy to the Jews. I have read Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto*, and when I read it, I realized what unmerited persecution Jews had already gone through and I felt then as I feel now that this persecution is, if I can again say so in all humility, a reflection upon those who, in the name of Christianity, have persecuted this long-suffering race.

The remedy? My remedy is twofold. One is that those who profess to be Christians should learn the virtue of toleration and charity, and the second is for Jews to rid themselves of the causes for such reproach as may be justly laid at their door.

The Jewish Chronicle, 2-10-1931

89. *INTERVIEW TO HENRY CARTER*

LONDON,
[*October 2, 1931*][1]

The drink question in India is most urgent. The religious teachings of both Hindus and Mohammedans require abstinence from alcoholic liquors. The future all-India Legislature would certainly regard it as essential to prohibit the importation, manufacture, or sale of all alcoholic beverages, subject to an exemption which would permit the supply of alcohol for medicinal, scientific, and industrial uses. The supply for medicinal purposes would be dependent on a medical prescription. Prohibition must apply equally to distillation in India and to imports of liquor from overseas.

[1] According to Carter the interview took place on Gandhiji's birthday.

I asked Mr. Gandhi how he would propose to deal with the question of the substantial revenue which Government in India derives from liquor taxation. He replied that this revenue should be replaced "by a corresponding cut in the Indian military budget".

We discussed different methods of approach to a solution of the Indian liquor problem. I pointed out that in England we stressed the importance of scientific teaching in the schools as to the nature of alcohol and the effect of alcoholic indulgence. Mr. Gandhi said that to a limited extent instruction on the subject was given in Indian schools, but he was disposed to rely on the religious sentiment of the country as sufficient to maintain the national protest against the use of drink. He regarded the increase of drinking in India as closely associated with industrialization, and stressed the fact that depressing industrial conditions favour the prevalence of alcoholism.

Local option and national prohibition seem to him to differ in this way:

In a country like Britain, where the liquor habit is rooted in history, and where probably the majority of people are users of liquor, local option might be applicable. But India needs no intermediate policy; she is ready for the enactment of complete national prohibition. The sentiment of the country would unquestionably sustain it.

With regard to the opium habit, he pointed out that this is not now as widely diffused in India as the alcohol habit. The growth of the poppy has diminished in recent years. The Government has rationed the export of opium, so that opium exports decrease by 10 per cent annually. This has been a wise and salutary measure. Mr. Gandhi said:

The opium habit is indigenous, but the moral sense of the Indian people would require early, thoroughgoing prohibitive action in this regard also. National prohibition of opium for use in India is requisite, except in so far as opium is required strictly for medicinal and scientific purposes.

The Manchester Guardian, 14-10-1931

90. SPEECH AT LUNCHEON[1]

LONDON,
October 2, 1931

Ever since I have come to London I have experienced nothing but friendliness and genuine affection. I have been making new friends from day to day. But you, sir, have reminded me that you have been friends in need, and friends in need are really friends indeed. When it appeared that India, or rather Congressmen, might be abandoned by nearly everybody on earth, you stood by the Congress firmly and accepted the Congress position as your own. You have today renewed your faith in the Congress programme and thereby you have lightened my labours.

It would be like carrying coals to Newcastle to deliver to you the message for which I have been sent here as the Congress representative. You know all about the merits of the Congress case and I am convinced that the Congress case is quite safe in your hands and you have by today's action set the seal upon the friendship, through the Congress, of the dumb and semi-starved millions of India's villages.

It is imagined that you have attended a lunch. My sympathies are wholly with you. I am accustomed to English lunches not through the taste but through the eyes, and when I saw this fruit-laden table, I realized what a sacrifice it was for you to take what is an apology for a luncheon. I hope that the spirit of sacrifice will forbear until tea-time comes and you provide yourselves with any little delicacies that English hotels and restaurants provide for you. But behind this apparent joke there is also seriousness. I know that you have sacrificed something. Some of you have sacrificed much for advocating the cause of India's independence—understanding the word 'independence' in its full English sense. But it may be that you will be called upon, if you continue your advocacy of India's cause, to make much larger sacrifices. I entertained no illusions in my mind when I

[1] The luncheon, to mark Gandhiji's 62nd birthday, was arranged by the Independent Labour Party, the Indian National Congress League and The Gandhi Society, at the Westminster Palace rooms. Fenner Brockway was in the chair. Altogether 388 persons were present. A charkha was presented to Gandhiji on the occasion.

undertook to come here. You heard me say on the first day of my entry into London that one of the most potent causes of my having come to London was to fulfil a word of honour that I had given to an honourable Englishman[1] and in pursuance of that word, without thinking what the result is likely to be, I am endeavouring to the utmost of my ability, to show to every Englishman and Englishwoman I meet that what the Congress stands for is what is deserved by India and, furthermore, I am endeavouring to show that the Congress is in earnest and I am here to vindicate the honour of the Congress, the honour of India, by asking for everything that is included in the Congress mandate. I should have no liberty to diminish anything from the Congress claim, save to the extent that is permissible in that mandate and that being so, I feel, the more I stay here, that the task is difficult—almost superhuman. There is so much ignorance of the conditions that prevail in India. There is so much ignorance of true history. As a Quaker young friend reminded me, when I was about to come here, that it was no use coming here so long as from childhood you were brought up, not on truthful real history, but upon false history, and I see that truth uttered by that Quaker friend exemplified as I come into contact with Englishmen and Englishwomen.

It is terribly difficult, almost impossible, for them to realize that, at least so far as Indians are concerned, they believe that the sum total of the activities of British administration in India has been harmful rather than beneficial to the nation. It is no use pointing out the benefit that India might have received from the British connection. It is of vital importance to sum up the pros and cons and find out how India has fared.

I have placed two infallible tests: Is it or is it not a fact that India today is the poorest country in the world, having millions of people remaining idle for six months of the year?

Is it or is it not a fact that India has been rendered emasculated not merely through compulsory disarmament, but also through being denied so many opportunities that members of a free nation are always entitled to?

If you find upon investigation that in these two cases England has failed, I do not say hopelessly, but to a very large extent, is it not time that England revised her policy?

As a friend said, and as the late Lokamanya Tilak said repeatedly from thousands of platforms: "Freedom and independence

[1] Lord Irwin

were India's birthright." It is not necessary for me to prove that British rule has been in the end British misrule. It is only enough for me to state that, misrule or good rule, India is entitled to her independence immediately there is a demand made for it on behalf of her voiceless millions.

It is no answer to be told that there are some in India who are afraid of the words 'freedom' and 'independence'. There are some of us, and I admit there are some of us, who are afraid of talking about the freedom of India if the British protection—so called—is withdrawn from India. But I assure you that the starving millions and those who have become politically conscious entertain no such fear and they are ready to pay the price for the sake of freedom. There are, however, well-marked limitations so long as the Congress retains her present workers and her faith in her present policy. We do not want the freedom of India if it is to be bought through the sacrifice of the lives of others—if it is to be bought by spilling the blood of the rulers. But if any sacrifice can be made by the nation, by ourselves, to win that freedom, then you will find that we will not hesitate to give a Gangesful of blood to flow in India in order to vindicate the freedom that has been so long delayed, and I know, as you, sir, reminded me, that I was not a stranger in your midst, but that I was a comrade. I know that I have this absolute assurance that so far as you are concerned and those whom you represent are concerned, you would always stand by us and prove once more to India that you are friends in need and therefore friends indeed.

I thank you once more for the great reception you have given to me. I know that it is not an honour done to me. You have done that honour to the principles which I hope are as dear to me as to you—if possible, dearer—and I hope with your prayers and your assistance I shall never deny the principles that I today proclaim.

Young India, 15-10-1931

91. SPEECH AT MINORITIES CONFERENCE[1]

LONDON,
October 2, 1931

Mr. Gandhi on behalf of the Congress also opposed special representation to the Depressed Classes. He said he would support special representation only for Muslims and Sikhs as a necessary evil. . . .

It appears that Mr. Gandhi warned the Conference that, if special representation was conceded, it must be conceded to all minorities.

The Hindu, 3-10-1931

92. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S RECEPTION[2]

LONDON,
October 2, 1931

Mr. Gandhi, who arrived three-quarters of an hour late, explained that he had been attending the informal minorities conciliation committee. He said:

I have undertaken work of very considerable responsibility and I could not tear myself away from a meeting that I was attending in connection with the very mission that has brought me from India.

Mr. Gandhi said there were 700,000 villages in India where the people lived under ill-nourished conditions. One of the best constructive activities of the Congress was that of bringing work to the workless women of the villages, irrespective of race, caste or creed. Probably at the present moment some 50,000 women were being given the work of spinning in their own homes. No constructive work in India was more important than that of banishing pauperism by giving the men and women not doles or charity but work. The great mass of villagers were without work for six months in the year. When they thought of this chronic unemployment, the unemployment in England

[1] This was the unofficial conciliation committee formed for mutual consultations outside the Round Table Conforence; *vide* "Extracts from Proceedings of Minorities Committee Meeting", pp. 102-4.

[2] The reception, to mark Gandhiji's birthday, was arranged by the Women's Indian Association and Saroj Nalini Dutt Memorial Association in King George's Hall at the Central Y.M.C.A. in the afternoon. Mrs. Brijlal Nehru was in the chair. A purse of £165 was presented to Gandhiji on the occasion.

dwindled into insignificance. He did not wish to underrate the difficulties arising in this country from unemployment, such as he had seen in Lancashire, but he did say that the unemployment in India deserved the sympathy and assistance of the whole world. He did not mean material sympathy: if they in India could give work to their people, there would be no need of money, for labour was another form of money. Mr. Gandhi paid a tribute to the "noble part the women of India took during the last struggle for the freedom of India".[1]

The manifestation of energy, devotion and sacrifice which thousands of women made during the last satyagraha in India was nothing short of a miracle. Though I had great faith in their ability to discharge their duty to the utmost, I was not prepared for the phenomenal awakening which occurred. This probably took the country several years in advance. If India today stands taller than she did eighteen months ago, I know Indian women had the largest share in it. It does not surprise me that the vast body of women in India does not want to scramble for special protection and special privileges. The women have set a noble example to men by abstaining from claiming special privileges.

I would like to have their blessings in order that I may not fail to represent the cause that has been entrusted to my hands.

The Times, 3-10-1931 and, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 4-10-1931

93. DIGAMBAR MUNIS

It seems that some misunderstanding has arisen regarding the opinion I had expressed about Digambar Jain *munis*. My article[2] was never intended to imply that any private individual could take the law into his own hands and harass Digambar *munis* or insult them. I have heard that at present three such *munis* are staying at Mandvi. During the monsoon they are not to go elsewhere. There is a fairly large Jain population in Mandvi. But I hear that other people there harass the *munis* on the basis of my article. If this is true, it should be regarded as a misinterpretation of my article. I had only discussed the moral aspect of the question. How could I have desired in it that anybody should be harassed, let alone Digambar *munis*? I hope that no one will harass them or any other such *munis*. This note was to have been written before the last conference at Simla, but

[1] What follows is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XLVII, pp. 107-9.

in all the hurry-skurry, along with many other important tasks, this matter also remained unattended to. I am sorry for it. I hope that no one has caused this harassment on the basis of my original article.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 4-10-1931

94. *STATEMENT ON KHATEDARS' CASE*[1]

[LONDON,
Before *October 5, 1931*][2]

With reference to the revenue collections in Bardoli and Borsad, it was from the very beginning a clear understanding that the Khatedars affected by the Civil Disobedience were to pay only as much as they could without borrowing. This was repeatedly brought out in the conversations between the Collector, Mr. Perry, of Kaira and his successor Mr. Bhadrapur and Mr. Kothawala, Collector of Surat. The correspondence carried on with them confirms this statement. So far as the terms of reference to the inquiry officer are concerned, I have distinctly understood that the standard referred to therein means ability to pay without borrowing.

The Bombay Chronicle, 8-10-1931

95. *SPEECH AT MEETING OF MINORITIES CONFERENCE*

LONDON,
October 5, 1931

The unofficial Minorities Conference began its sitting at 3 p.m. and was still sitting at 5.45 p.m. It is understood that in order to appreciate the full claims of the minority communities, representatives of each community outlined their position and questions discussed mainly concerned with the percentage of representation and weightage and reservation of seats.

[1] One of the points to be determined in the Bardoli inquiry was whether the revenue collected from the Khatedars "was in excess of what would have been collected if the standard which had been applied to other villages was observed in reference to the villages in question". *Vide* also Vol. XLVI.

[2] The statement appeared under the date-line October 5, 1931.

During discussion great importance was laid on settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question as the real crux of the minority problem. The impression was created that if the Hindu-Muslim question was settled the claims of other minorities would be automatically adjusted.

The stand against communal representation and separate representation is reported to have been made by Mr. Gandhi towards the close of today's sitting of the unofficial committee after representatives of various minorities had presented their claims for separate representation and the quantum of representation.

Mr. Gandhi is reported to have given expression to the sense of unreality if all claims were taken at their face value and said that he felt cramped and hemmed in amid a plethora of claims. Though he had not been idle he was hitherto unable to see daylight but if he saw light he would act.

Mr. Gandhi is reported to have expressed the belief that he was able to help but to have invited the conference to elect another chairman if they thought otherwise, for he would not be ashamed to say that he had tried and failed.

Urging the need for a spirit of conciliation, Mr. Gandhi is reported to have invited the Conference to take more time if necessary, but declared that he was unable to compromise on fundamentals and, desirous as they were to see India a great nation, the Congress would never agree to communal representation and would be unworthy of its name if it allowed separate representation.

The Hindu, 6-10-1931

96. LETTER TO E. DOLBY SHELTON

October 6, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to receive your letter and to recall the pleasant days I spent under your roof at Ventnor.[1]

I have not seen the *Vegetarian News*. I was a born vegetarian, but I had lapsed from my vegetarianism owing to foolish companionship in youth. On coming to London I became a convinced vegetarian, through having read Mr. Salt's essay.

Is this quite clear?

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 17889

[1] The reference presumably is to the visit mentioned in *Autobiography*; *vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 55.

97. SPEECH AT MEETING OF FRIENDS OF INDIA[1]

LONDON,
[October 7, 1931][2]

So far as human effort is concerned, I seem to be failing. Burdens are being thrown upon me which I am ill able to bear. It is a Herculean task, at the end of which there may be nothing more to be done and there may be no result. But it does not matter. No honest genuine effort has ever failed. But if I am experiencing these chilly and chilling difficulties so far as my work is concerned, I am having nothing but perennial joy outside the Conference and the committees. People seem instinctively to understand the thing. Although I am an utter stranger, they wish me well and wish well to the cause. The cause and I are one, they know, and so they greet me with smiles and blessings and this applies to people high and low. And so I comfort myself that, so long as my cause is truthful and the means clean and non-violent, all is well.

Young India, 22-10-1931

98. SPEECH AT MINORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
October 8, 1931

PRIME MINISTER AND FRIENDS,

It is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce utter failure on my part to secure an agreed solution of the communal question through informal conversations among and with the representatives of different groups. I apologize to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and the other colleagues for the waste of a precious week. My only consolation lies in the fact that when I accepted the burden of carrying on these talks, I knew that there was not much hope of success, and still more

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter"

[2] Mahadev Desai states that the meeting took place a day before the Minorities Committee meeting where Gandhiji announced the failure of his efforts to bring about a compromise on the communal question. This was on October 8; *vide* the following item.

in the fact that I am not aware of having spared any effort to reach a solution.

But to say that the conversations have to our utter shame failed is not to say the whole truth. Causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian Delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent; we are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here. Further, you will allow me to say that this was hardly the time to summon the Minorities Committee. It lacks the sense of reality in that we do not know what it is that we are going to get. If we knew in a definite manner that we were going to get the thing we want, we should hesitate fifty times before we throw it away in a sinful wrangle, as it would be if we are told that the getting of it would depend on the ability of the present Delegation to produce an agreed solution of the communal tangle. The solution can be the crown of the swaraj constitution, not its foundation, if only because our differences have hardened, if they have hardened, if they have not arisen, by reason of the foreign domination. I have not a shadow of a doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.

I, therefore, venture to suggest that the Minorities Committee be adjourned *sine die* and that the fundamentals of the constitution be hammered into shape as quickly as may be. Meanwhile, the informal work of discovering a true solution of the communal problem will and must continue; only it must not baulk or be allowed to block the progress of constitution-building. Attention must be diverted from it and concentrated on the main part of the structure.

I hardly need point out to the Committee that my failure does not mean the end of all hope of arriving at an agreed solution. My failure does not even mean my utter defeat; there is no such word in my dictionary. My confession merely means failure of the special effort for which I presumed to ask for a week's indulgence, which you so generously gave.

I propose to use the failure as a stepping-stone to success, and I invite you all to do likewise; but, should all effort at agreement fail, even when the Round Table Conference reaches the end of its labours, I would suggest the addition of a clause to the expected constitution appointing a judicial tribunal that would examine all claims and give its final decision on all the points that may be left unsettled.

Nor need this Committee think that the time given for enabling informal conversations to be carried on has been altogether wasted. You will be glad to learn that many friends not members of the Delegation have been giving their attention to the question. Among these I would mention Sir Geoffrey Corbett. He has produced a scheme of redistribution of the Punjab which, though it has not found acceptance, is, in my opinion, well worth studying. I am asking Sir Geoffrey if he will kindly elaborate and circulate it among the members. Our Sikh colleagues have also produced another, which is at least worthy of study. Sir Hubert Carr produced last night an ingenious and novel proposal to set up for the Punjab two Legislatures, the lower to satisfy the Muslim claim and the upper nearly satisfying the Sikh claim. Though I am no believer in a bicameral Legislature, I am much attracted by Sir Hubert's proposal, and I would invite him to pursue it further with the same zeal with which, I gratefully admit, he followed and contributed to the informal deliberations.

Lastly, inasmuch as the only reason for my appearance at these deliberations is that I represent the Indian National Congress, I must clearly set forth its position. In spite of appearances to the contrary, especially in England, the Congress claims to represent the whole nation, and most decidedly the dumb millions, among whom are included the numberless untouchables, who are more suppressed than depressed, as also in a way the more unfortunate and neglected classes known as Backward Races.

Here is the Congress position in a nutshell. I am reading the Congress resolution on the subject.

> However much it may have failed in the realization, the Congress has, since its inception, set up pure nationalism as its ideal. It has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. The following Lahore resolution was the culminating point in its advance towards nationalism:
>
> "In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is necessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions:
>
> The Congress believes that in an independent India communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines; but as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, have expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions, proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned."
>
> Hence the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem, but at this critical juncture in the

history of the nation it was felt that the Working Committee should suggest for adoption by the country a solution, though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible, and generally acceptable to the communities concerned. The Working Committee, therefore, after full and free discussion, unanimously passed the following scheme:

1. (a) The article in the constitution relating to fundamental rights shall include a guarantee to the communities concerned of the protection of their cultures, languages, scripts, education, profession and practice of religion and religious endowments;

(b) Personal laws shall be protected by specific provisions to be embodied in the constitution;

(c) Protection of political and other rights of minority communities in the various Provinces shall be the concern and be within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

2. The Franchise shall be extended to all adult men and women—

And then there is a note to this:

The Working Committee is committed to adult franchise by the Karachi resolution of the Congress, and cannot entertain any alternative franchise. In view, however, of misapprehensions in some quarters, the Committee wishes to make it clear that, in any event, the franchise shall be uniform and so extensive as to reflect in the electoral roll the proportion in the population of every community.

3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India; (b) That for the Hindus in Sind, the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province, and for Hindus and Muslims in any province where they are less than 25 per cent of the population, seats shall be reserved in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures on the basis of population, with the right to contest additional seats.

4. The appointments shall be made by non-party Public Service Commissions, which shall prescribe the minimum qualifications, and which shall have due regard to the efficiency of the Public Service as well as to the principle of equal opportunity to all communities for a fair share in the Public Services of the country.

5. In the formation of Federal and Provincial Cabinets, the interests of minority communities shall be recognized by convention.

6. The North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan shall have the same form of government and administration as other Provinces.

7. Sind shall be constituted into a separate Province provided that the people of Sind are prepared to bear the financial burden of the separated Provinces.

8. The future constitution of the country shall be Federal. The residuary powers shall vest in the federating units unless, on further examination, it is found to be against the best interest of India.

The Working Committee has adopted the foregoing scheme as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalism and undiluted nationalism. Whilst on the one hand the Working Committee hopes that the whole nation will endorse the scheme, on the other it assures those who take extreme views and cannot adopt it, that the Committee will gladly, as it is bound to by the Lahore Resolution, accept without reservation any other scheme if it commands the acceptance of all the parties concerned.[1]

That is the Congress resolution. If, however, a national solution is impossible and the Congress scheme proves unacceptable, I am not precluded from endorsing any other reasonable scheme which may be acceptable to the parties concerned. The Congress position on this question, therefore, is one of the greatest possible accommodation. Where it cannot help it will not obstruct. Needless to say, the Congress will whole-heartedly support any scheme of private arbitration. It seems to have been represented that I am opposed to any representation of the untouchables on the Legislature. This is a travesty of the truth. What I have said, and what I must repeat, is that I am opposed to their special representation. I am convinced that it can do them no good, and may do much harm; but the Congress is wedded to adult franchise. Therefore, millions of them can be placed on the Voters' Roll. It is impossible to conceive that, with untouchability fast disappearing, nominees of these voters can be boycotted by the others; but what these people need more than election to the Legislatures is protection from social and religious persecution. Custom, which is often more powerful than law, has brought them to a degradation of which every thinking Hindu has need to feel ashamed and to do penance. I should, therefore, have the most drastic legislation rendering criminal all the special persecution to which these fellow-countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God, the conscience of Hindus has been stirred, and untouchability will soon be a relic of our sinful past.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 530-1

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVII, pp. 140-1.

99. EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

October 8, 1931

You will have seen with sorrow the failure of my first effort. It does not dismay me. I shall toil on. I repeat the promise given to you that I shall take no decisions on the important questions discussed by us without first seeking an interview with you and placing my difficulties before you.

Halifax, p. 317

100. SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND[1]

LONDON,
October 8, 1931

The meeting was begun with a brief period of silence and the Rev. W. Paton, who presided, welcomed Mr. Gandhi and expressed the appreciation of the missionary societies of the fact that Mr. Gandhi could spare time to meet them in the midst of tremendous pressure of work.

Mr. Gandhi, after expressing pleasure at being present and at meeting those who represented a much larger audience, said:

I am appearing before you like a prisoner at the bar, but my jailors are friends. There must be no barrier between us, no harbouring of any grievance on either side. From youth upwards I have enjoyed the friendliest relations with missionaries throughout the world, and in South Africa I came into close touch with some of the finest of Christian missionaries. I attended your churches most regularly and also private prayer meetings and the views I express now are the views I expressed then.

A temporary misunderstanding had arisen between you and me. When newspaper men pry into the affairs of those leading public lives the latter get misrepresented, sometimes maliciously and at other times unintentionally.

[1] The conference was held at Church Missionary House, 6 Salisbury Square. The Rev. W. Paton presided. The meeting was private and the only report issued to the Press was to the effect that a friendly discussion had taken place.

Responsible men should learn from my very bitter experience not to believe generally what the reporters state. The recent report about my attitude to missions was an unconscious misrepresentation, for I got to know the source and the reporter in question. I was tired out at the time and was having exercise early in the morning. The reporter walked with me and bombarded me with questions. He did not take any notes and we spoke on a variety of topics. When I saw the criticisms and innuendoes, I realized at once that I had to suffer in consequence of what the reporter wrote, even though he was friendly.

I speak as a public worker and as an amateur journalist of thirty years standing. I know the difficulty of telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and the great difficulty of doing justice to your opponents and the greater difficulty of handling facts. Do not believe generally what the reporters say about me. If you have doubt about their statements send them to me and ask me about them. I have had letters from all parts of India and from England and the U.S.A. asking me if it was true that I would prohibit all missionary enterprise and especially proselytizing. What I meant was just the contrary.

I cannot stand for any kind of compulsion. Any suggestion that I should want legislation to prohibit missionary enterprise or to interfere with the beliefs of other people is unthinkable.

The idea of converting people to one's faith by speech and writings, by appeal to reason and emotion and by suggesting that the faith of his forefathers is a bad faith, in my opinion, limits the possibilities of serving humanity. I believe that the great religions of the world are all more or less true and that they have descended to us from God. Having come to us, however, through human media, they have become adulterated. Holding this belief, I hold also that no religion is absolutely perfect. In the bosom of God there is nothing imperfect, but immediately it comes through a human medium, it constantly suffers change and deterioration. The seeker after truth most humbly recognizes this possibility. I have found that the progress of truth is impeded by the spoken word which is the limitation of thought, for no man has been able to give the fullest expression in words to thought. The very nature of thought is limitless and boundless.

A man of prayer believes that God works in a mysterious way and wants the whole world to possess the truth he himself has seen. He would simply pray for it to be shared. It passes; it takes wing.

Shall I use a simile of which I am never tired and which you will forgive. Religion is like a rose. It throws out the scent which

attracts us like a magnet and we are drawn to it involuntarily. The scent of religious contact has a greater pungency than the scent of the rose, that is why I hold my view with reference to conversion. It is good and proper that, when we feel satisfied that we have found God and that God has spoken to us, we should wish to share that mystery, but as God has spoken to us mysteriously, we should allow that God-Mystery to flow from us in exactly the same manner.

Whilst I criticize this part of missionary work, I willingly admit that missions have done indirect good to India. There is no doubt about this. But for my having come under Christian influence, some of my social work would not have been done. My fierce hatred of child marriage—I gladly say—is due to Christian influence. I have come into contact with many splendid specimens of Christian missionaries. In spite of differences I could not possibly help being affected by their merit. And so you will find growing up in my Ashram unmarried girls, though they are free to marry if they wish. I am speaking not of university women but of girls who belong to the uneducated class.

Before I knew anything of Christianity I was an enemy of untouchability. I could not understand my mother, whom I adored, withdrawing the hem of her garment from the untouchables. My feelings gained momentum owing to the fierce attack from Christian sources on this evil.

If I want a pattern of the ideal missionary, I should instance C. F. Andrews. If he were here, he would blush for what I want to say. I believe that he is today truer, broader and better for his toleration of the other principal religions of the world. He never speaks with me about conversion to Christianity though we are closest friends. I have many friends, but the friendship between Charlie Andrews and myself is especially deep.

It was love at first sight when I saw him first at Durban. If you asked me whether I have noticed any laxity or indifference about his own fundamental position, I would say that he has become firmer in his own faith and in the growth of love for others. I think, whereas he used to see blemishes in Hinduism, today perhaps he sees those very blemishes in another setting, and therefore becomes more approachable to the Hindu. He is today a potent instrument in influencing the lives of Hindus for the better in hundreds and thousands of cases.

His Indian friends in South Africa wrote to me that he was *Deenabandhu*—brother of those in distress. He has endeared himself even to the scavenger class, the pariahs. He went to them natu-

rally and influenced their conduct in the simplest manner, and now he is held in very great affection. If I were to compete with him as to which of us had the greatest influence with these people in South Africa, I am not sure that he would not floor me.

I want to put all my cards on the table and I want you to do so too. I hope you will be able to say, 'We listened to the old man that evening and we heard nothing that was not truthful and sincere.'

After Mr. Gandhi had finished, and before questions were asked Mr. Paton read the resolution passed in 1924 by the Delhi Unity Conference on the subject of Religious Freedom:[1]

> This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential, and condemns any desecration of places of worship to whatsoever faith they may belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith, and further condemns any attempt by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to enforce one's own religious observance at the cost of the rights of others.
>
> With a view to give effect to the general principles promoting better relations between the various communities of India laid down in the above resolution and to secure full toleration of all faiths, beliefs and religious practices, this Conference records its opinion:
>
> That every individual or group shall have full liberty to hold and give expression to his or their beliefs and follow any religious practice, with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with their rights. In no case may such individual or group revile the founders, holy persons or tenets of any other faith.
>
> That every individual is at liberty to follow any faith and to change it whenever he so wills, and shall not by reason of such change of faith render himself liable to any puhishment or persecution at the hands of the followers of the faith renounced by him.
>
> That every individual or group is at liberty to convert or re-convert another by argument or persuasion but must not attempt to do so, or prevent its being done, by force, fraud or other unfair means, such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under 16 years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under 16 years of age is found stranded without his parent or guardian by a person of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to a person of his own faith. There must be no secrecy about any conversion or reconversion.

[1] This was about the time of Gandhiji's fast for communal unity in Delhi in September 1924; *vide* Vol. XXV.

Mr. Paton mentioned that Mr. Gandhi, though engaged in his fast at the time, had himself taken a large part in drafting these resolutions. He said that he hoped these resolutions still represented Mr. Gandhi's views.

To this question Mr. Gandhi gave definite assent.

The Rev. Godfrey Phillips of the London Missionary Society said:

"I wish we could understand one another better with regard to what is happening amongst the 'untouchables' in connection with Christian missions. There are places in the world where there is no 'scent of the rose'. We have found in our experience that when the real 'untouchable', the outcaste, is down and out, we can do nothing permanent except by implanting in his inmost heart something that has vitalizing power—in our experience that is fellowship with God in Christ. We can only get at them in a community. We are with the Mahatma in his feeling for the hungry masses. We are with him in his desire to remove untouchability, but we feel also that we must put inside the outcaste something that will work inside him for always. Can we not understand each other better? Sometimes when we try to get land for our work, it is the Mahatma's followers who prevent us. Even if the Mahatma does not wish us to convert, our belief in conversion is due to the fact that we really can see no other way."

MR. GANDHI: I honour Mr. Phillips for his question. I don't want to prevent by legislation or force the work of converting, but I wish I could convince Mr. Phillips and other missionaries that in my own humble opinion it is an erroneous way. He has used my analogy of the rose. He says that the missionaries have to take as it were a rose to the untouchables. I would call him a walking rose, and he does not need to be anything more. He does not need to talk about God because these men would be able to see God somewhere written in him and in his conduct, just as, if the rose were planted in front of the pariah's house, it would silently spread its scent. The rose would not have to speak, neither would the Christian missionary have to speak. If Mr. Phillips thinks that before he can come to the help of the untouchables, he must bring the message of God, or the message of the Bible to the untouchables, how much more then to a man like me. I press this point after having mixed with tens of thousands of untouchables, and done much work of this kind. They do not understand his language. They understand me better because I speak their language. I speak to them about their degraded condition. I do not speak about God. I feel that I take the message of God to them in this particular manner just as to a starving man I take the message of God through the bread I give him. I have no axe to grind. I must not exploit him, I just give him the bread. If I

want to convey God to the untouchable I must take Him in the way that he needs. I go to the untouchables and say, 'What God can I give you unless it is what you need.'

Mr. Gandhi went on to give an illustration of the pitiable state of an old man of the 'untouchable' class, who was not even allowed within sight. Said Mr. Gandhi:

He was brought to me to present an address. The man was afraid of everything, like a countryman set down in the middle of London traffic.

He dropped the address he was to give, but, said Mr. Gandhi:

I picked it up and showed him the right way to hold it. By my attitude I succeeded in gaining his confidence, and I felt that by doing so I had given him a message from God. If I were a Christian missionary (and I can enter into the hearts of Christian missionaries), I would go into their midst as Elwin[1] has gone. He is today planning to work among the untouchables. He will establish Christian ashrams among the untouchables, with a church in a mud-hut for his own and his colleagues' use. He wants simply to live among them as God may guide his life.

The Rev. C. E. Wilson of the Baptist Missionary Society said:

"To me the religious life may be simply described as a life of discipleship. We are all learners. The true missionary claims to be a disciple, with a trust to carry out the commission of his Lord, and to persuade others to be disciples. Mr. Gandhi seems to me to deprecate, almost to condemn, religious teaching. We are to go and live among people but not try to make them disciples or instil new faith into them. That seems to me to confute Mr. Gandhi's whole life. Does Mr. Gandhi mean that it is not right for us to go to India or any place and try to make people disciples, to teach the supreme truth of Jesus Christ if we believe him to be the highest that we know? Mr. Gandhi has been preaching to us today. Does he really mean to exclude all preaching?"

MR. GANDHI: Language fails to convey meaning; the uttered word is the limitation of thought. There is room for both writing and speech, though I find it would often be better if I wrote and spoke less, but I do not seek to convert anybody to my faith. Though my conviction is strong enough in me for me to die for that conviction, that force does not carry me to the goal of believing that the same thing should be believed by my fellow men. I know what God wishes for me, but I am not so presumptuous as to

[1] Verrier Elwin

believe that I know what God wishes for others. Religious truth comes to us mysteriously. How did sudden upheaval come to Paul and others? Religion is a matter that must be left to God. I do not say 'no religious teaching'; bring up a man to the highest light his own faith has to give him. I know how impertinent it is for an utter stranger to speak to those to whom the message of the Bible is sacred as life itself. I am speaking to you as a seeker after God, just as you also are seekers after God.

Once some of my friends thought that if I talked with Mr. F. B. Meyer it would make for my conversion. They thought that I was incomplete without acknowledging the message of Christ, and so they put me in touch with Mr. Meyer. He asked me: 'Have you found peace?' When I said 'Yes', he said: 'I have nothing to say to you.' Religion is a personal matter, and I am not going to ask another man to become a Hindu or a Parsi. I would be doing something contrary to my belief. I am sharing with you my own experience, and trying to show you as fellow-workers that probably, if you could see eye to eye with me, your work would flourish more and more. You have amazing self-sacrifice; you are great organizers; you are good men. I want to multiply occasions for your service. I want to work closer with you, but I do not want you to get India to change her faith.[1]

The Rev. W. H. G. Holmes of the Oxford Mission of Calcutta:

"I was in the south of India walking with some Indian students across a path which lay through a field. As we approached a group of Indians, they suddenly withdrew to a distance of about 40 yards into the middle of the field. I went up to these Indians and asked why they had done this. They did this because they feared we were Brahmins, and therefore they must remove themselves. I then said they need not have done that for us because we were Christians, and regarded them as our brothers, and there was a Father in Heaven to whom they were just as dear as we were. They answered me: 'These are good words, will you please come to our village and open a school there.' Would we be right in going to teach them about this Father, who I told them loved them as dearly as he loved us, and would Mr. Gandhi encourage them to let us have land to build on in order to teach these people?"

MR. GANDHI: Yes, I would, on one condition, that you will teach them the religion of their fathers through the religion they have got. Don't say to them: 'The only way to know the Father is our way.' God is Father to the 'untouchable', to all of us, but a Father who appears to you in another garb. Show the 'untouch-

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVI, "Foreign Missionaries", pp. 27-9.

able' the Father as he appears in his surroundings. Unless you are satisfied that we do not know the real Father at all, and then of course it is your duty to say—'What you know as Father is no Father at all. What you believe comes from Satan.' I sometimes receive letters saying that I am a good man, but that I am doing the devil's work. I feel I adore the same Father though in a different form. I may not adore him as 'God'. To me that name makes no appeal, but when I think of Him as Rama, He thrills me. To think of God as 'God' does not fire me as the name Rama does. There is all the poetry in it. I know that my forefathers have known him as Rama. They have been uplifted for Rama, and when I take the name of Rama, I arise with the same energy. It would not be possible for me to use the name 'God' as it is written in the Bible. It is so contrary to experience. I should not be attracted. I should not be lifted to the truth. Therefore my whole soul rejects the teaching that Rama is not my God. Go to the untouchables; give them schools; give them all, but not with your idea in the back of your mind. If anyone were able to show me that God the Father had to be approached in one particular way, I would not hesitate a moment, I would go to the whole world, but my life would have to be rewritten. I have no disciples except myself and he is a terrible one. I have followers, but I do not feel that they are disciples. My search is for peace, and to show God through the life I live. I give myself to my fellow-men. This is the secret of peace and happiness also.

A member of the conference asked two questions. First, whether Mr. Gandhi had said in an interview with Dr. Mott in India that the effect of Christian missions had been wholly bad.[1] Mr. Gandhi indicated that the quotation was entirely strange to him, and again repeated that he had been the victim of false reporting. The questioner further referred to the command to Christians to go out to all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Mr. Gandhi's reply to this was that, if the questioner believed that these were the inspired words in the Bible, then he was called upon to obey implicitly—why did he ask a non-Christian for his interpretation?

Mr. Paton thanked Mr. Gandhi warmly on behalf of all those present for the frankness and cordiality with which he had spoken. He said that Mr. Gandhi had made it abundantly plain that the issue between himself and the Christian missionary movement lay much deeper than was sometimes supposed. Mr. Gandhi was not desirous only that missionaries should be courteous and self-effacing, and should identify themselves with the people of the country, but was opposed to something which was fundamental in Chris-

[1] *Vide* Vol. XL, pp. 57-61.

tianity. Mr. Paton asked that Mr. Gandhi would believe that missionaries, and those who supported them, were sincere in saying that the content of their message was not themselves, or the fancied superiority of their country and civilization, but was the Person and Message of Jesus Christ. The spirit of missions could only be that of witness to what men and women most deeply believe to be true and therefore must share with others.

The Rev. W. Wilson Cash of the Church Missionary Society voiced the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Gandhi.

From the Records of the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. Courtesy: Rev. C. B. Firth

101. *INTERVIEW WITH MARIA MONTESSORI*[1]

[On or before *October 9, 1931*]

Gandhiji greeting her, said:

We are members of the same family.

"I bring you the greetings of children," said Madame Montessori.

GANDHIJI: If you have children I have children too. Friends in India ask me to imitate you. I say to them, no, I should not imitate you but should assimilate you and the fundamental truth underlying your method.

MADAME MONTESSORI: As I am asking my own children to assimilate the heart of Gandhiji. I know that feeling for me over there in your part of the world is deeper than here.

GANDHIJI: Yes, you have the largest number of adherents in India outside Europe.

Young India, 22-10-1931

102. *INTERVIEW TO SHAW DESMOND*[2]

LONDON,
[On or before *October 9, 1931*]

He discussed the question of the education of the child, listened with rapt attention as Gandhiji gave him the rich experience of a lifetime of the value of self-restraint and the great part it plays as much in the life of the child as of the adult. "What is the cause of the present chaos?" he asked. Gandhiji said:

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter", dated October 9, 1931. The interview could have taken place on October 7, 1931; *vide* "Letter to J. Theodor Harris", p. 89. Wednesday was October 7, 1931.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter", dated October 9, 1931.

It is exploitation, I will not say of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know.

"Don't you think", said Mr. Desmond, "all these people here are overfed? How can we teach them to feed less?" Gandhiji said:

The force of circumstances. They are bound to realize one of these days that England is not going to return to her old prosperity. They must realize that many nations bid fair to divide the spoils with them and, as soon as they do so, they will cut the coat according to their cloth.

"This crisis therefore", said Mr. Desmond, with great emphasis, "is a great thing, I have no doubt."

Young India, 22-10-1931

103. LETTER TO ERNEST ESDAILE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 9, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[1] If Monday, the 19th inst., at 8 o'clock is convenient to you, I would gladly address the members of the Club.

Yours sincerely,

ERNEST ESDAILE, ESQ.
CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C. 2

From a photostat: S.N. 18045

[1] The addressee in his letter of October 7 had requested Gandhiji to speak at the Constitutional Club. He had also acknowledged an earlier letter from Gandhiji, which, however, is not available.

104. LETTER TO MAHMUDULLAH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 9, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. You are unnecessarily sensitive. There is no disinclination on my part to give you my confidence;[1] only there was nothing to give. I have no secrets of my own; I have sometimes to keep the secrets of others, but that can have nothing to do with your relations with me.

If there were any negotiations which had to be carried on, they were being carried on by Mrs. Naidu; therefore there was nothing that I could really do. You came to give me some information, and I was grateful for it.

As for the Hindu delegates, I really do not understand the complaint. I have seen everybody who has wanted to see me. Wherever consultation has been desired, I have attended such consultations and so far as the lead is concerned, I do not consider myself competent to give it to any one section, and for giving a general lead, I have no foothold.

Yours sincerely,

MAHMUDULLAH, ESQ.

From a photostat: S.N. 18046

[1] The addressee in his letter of October 7 had said he wanted to assist "in the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim dispute" but was hampered because of "not being able to claim your confidence".

105. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTHI

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 9, 1931

DEAR SATYAMURTHI,

I have your letter giving me your views about the scope of our demands—about Indian States' Subjects, Defence, External Affairs and Finance. I do not know when the subjects will be reached, but of course I shall bear in mind all you say on the four heads.

Yours sincerely,

S. SATYAMURTHI, ESQ.
2/18 CAR STREET
TRIPLICANE
MADRAS

From a photostat: S.N. 18047

106. NOTE FOR C. LLEWELYN HOWELL

October 9, 1931

IMPOSSIBLE[1].

From a photostat: S.N. 17719

107. SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
October 9, 1931

Well, Lord Chancellor, I know that I have been somewhat instrumental in postponing the deliberations of this Committee; and, being in that unfortunate position, I now feel some diffidence when I say that we cannot afford to waste a single minute.[2] We

[1] This was noted on the top of Howell's letter of September 14 requesting Gandhiji to "sign some pages taken from my book".

[2] The chairman had suggested adjournment of the meeting till Tuesday, October 13.

have come, as you very properly say, all these several thousand miles in order to work, and not in order to seek recreation or holiday; so I would certainly say that, if it is at all possible, we should go through the work of the Federal Structure Committee without waiting for a single minute. If at the back of our minds, individually or collectively, the thought is lurking that, even though we might be sitting over the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee, we would be really marking time until the minorities question is settled—if that really is the feeling which we would not or we dare not express—then I would suggest that we express that feeling and come to a decision.

I myself endeavoured to express my own deliberate opinion yesterday that there is not that absolutely vital connection with the work of this Committee. The minorities question is undoubtedly a very important, if not the most important, question. It has always occupied in my own mind its natural place, but it has never overshadowed the other equally important consideration. And, after having laboured at this question for seven days, I saw more clearly than I had seen before that probably the minorities question would not be satisfactorily settled unless the great fundamental questions were settled. That being my conviction, I should like the proceedings of this Committee to be clothed with reality, and that, on several heads which you, with your amazing industry, have been piling upon us from day to day and week to week, we should come to summary decisions instead of making speeches. Therefore, if I may give my opinion without any mental reservation whatsoever, I would suggest that, if we really feel, as I feel, that we should consider and face the questions that are before this Committee on their merits, irrespective of what may happen in connection with the minorities question, then I say that we should sacrifice every holiday; and I know that we shall get the strength to go through this work without coming to grief if we mean serious business.

But I repeat, as I conclude, that if at the back of our minds the impression is that we should continue to work and yet not work, I think that it would not be just to India, it would not be just to ourselves, and it would not be just to the British Ministers either. Therefore, I feel most strongly that we do not need any holiday. Every minute that we have is really pledged to this work and no other.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 160

108. INTERVIEW TO H. N. BRAILSFORD[1]

LONDON,
[On or before *October 11, 1931*][2]

GANDHIJI: If she wants to draw typical peasants,[3] she should not go to Gujarat. Gujarat is relatively prosperous. She should go to Orissa. There the peasants are nothing but skin and bone. Even the bullocks are mere skeletons. You can see their ribs. She must certainly go to Orissa. An artist can help by showing the world how these peasants live.

THE ARTIST: How long will it be before you can raise them into a fine race? Isn't malaria a great obstacle?

G. Malaria is quite easy to eradicate. It's all a matter of diet. It can be cured with plenty of milk and fruit.

THE ARTIST: I suppose you will have to educate them to this diet.

G. It's not education they require. They know perfectly well what they need. It's poverty that's the difficulty. We can grow the fruit in India, yet the peasants never eat it. You can't grow it in England, yet your poor have it to eat. The people here in the slums round about live as well as the middle class in India. When I think of the poverty in which the peasants live, I feel ashamed that I have fruit to eat and fruit juice to drink. We can do nothing so long as we have this octopus bleeding us white, draining us and taxing us all the time. Why, they even tax our salt—a necessity of life, only less necessary than air and water. It ought to be free as they are. I know you pay a rate for water in England. But this salt tax is worse than a rate. It's a monopoly. The idea of a thing so natural and necessary—after air and water the one thing necessary,—the idea of it being taxed! Nature bestows it on us and we may not use it. There's the salt beside the sea and they forbid us to gather it.

[1] Extracted from Brailsford's own account of the interview. The artist figuring in the text was a friend of Brailsford.

[2] October 12, the day preceding the date of publication, was a Silence Day. Presumably, therefore, the interview took place on October 11, or a little before.

[3] Brailsford had said that the painter was "eager to paint peasant life in India".

H. N. B. When you abolish the salt tax what substitute will you propose to fill the hole in the revenue?

G. Salt is a small matter. What really matters is the excise on toddy and opium. That is really a big proportion of the revenue. There's no way of filling that gap, unless we can cut down the cost of the army.

That is the octopus that is strangling us. This terrible drain must come to an end.

H. N. B. That, I imagine will be the chief issue at the Round Table Conference.

G. Indeed it will: we can't shirk it.

THE ARTIST: Do you intend, then, to clear out the white garrison?.

G. Certainly I intend to clear it out.

THE ARTIST: Do you include the civilians with the troops?

G. They are part of the burden we have to carry; they make government too costly. There is no justification for the great salaries they draw. They live far better than the same class at home.

H. N. B. Isn't there something to be said for the usual explanation of these high salaries? These civilians are living in exile and in a very trying climate.

G. That is no longer so. Better communications have changed all that. There is a mail twice a week: they can keep in touch with their families at home, and they go to the hills in the hot weather. We would welcome them if they would live among us like Indians. But they isolate themselves. They shut themselves up in their cantonments. The very name has a military flavour, and, indeed, these cantonments are still under military law. Any house within them may be seized if the military say they require it. That happened to a mutual friend of ours, though he had built the house for himself.

H. N. B. There are two distinct questions about the army, or rather there's one question with two branches. There's the question of principle, India's control over the army, and there's the economic question, which would be satisfied by the reduction of the army. Must you insist on both?

G. I must see to it that I have control over my army.

H. N. B. A nation is not fully a nation unless she has it.

G. They tell me that I must have this army to protect me against the Pathans. I don't want its protection. I want to be free to take my owh course. I may decide to fight them: I

may decide to conciliate them. But I want to be free to do it myself. We would agree for a time to maintain some of the white army in India, but they tell us that Tommies can't be transferred to the control of an Indian Government.

H. N. B. They can't be transferred without their consent. I should think that many of them would agree to re-enlist, under satisfactory conditions, in an Indian army.

G. Yes, that might be the solution, but when the army is reduced, I'm afraid that will add to the number of your unemployed.

H. N. B. Would you, then, if the principle of India's control were granted, be willing to negotiate over the numbers and cost of the reduced white garrison which you would be willing to maintain for a term of years?

G. Yes, we will agree to anything of that kind, if it is in the interest of India.

H. N. B. Well, I think that would be rather to our interest than yours.

G. All the same, we would agree to that.

H. N. B. It's the principle of control that makes the difficulty. I don't think you'll get that. Reduction is another matter; in some degree you'll get that. We are going into the Disarmament Conference presently: this might be part of our contribution to world disarmament.

G. I've said what I want. My terms are known. But they are all holding back, as if they were afraid to say what they'll grant. But I'm quite prepared to wait.

H. N. B. Things are bound to move slowly while we are absorbed in our economic crisis. That may be an advantage, however. A wise statesman could make a reasonable settlement without the fear of popular clamour.

G. What has astonished me is the friendliness of the workers whom I have been meeting here in Bow.

THE ARTIST It's the middle class that is hostile.

G. I'll get at them through the workers. The real difficulty is that they have no conception of what India is suffering. They sincerely believe that India is the brightest jewel in the British crown. They are honestly proud of the record of British rule. It never enters their mind that there can be anything amiss.

THE ARTIST: I'm only an outsider, but isn't there another difficulty? Are not the Indian Princes the worst obstacle in your path?

G. A Prince is in the same position as a British Officer; he has to obey.

H. N. B. Then can you leave the Princes under the control of the Viceroy?

G. We must get control for the Indian Government.

H. N. B. But don't they prefer to be under the Viceroy?

G. Ask any of them, and they'll say so. But deep down in their heart of hearts is it possible that they can be content? After all, they're the same colour as we are. They are Indians.

H. N. B. But they gain something under the present arrangement which you could never allow. The bureaucracy exacts politeness from them, and political correctitude, but it allows them to treat their subjects pretty much as they please.

G. "Politeness" isn't the word for it. Say rather 'abject submission'. Not one of them can call his soul his own. The Nizam may start some project or other. An angry letter from the Viceroy is enough to stop him. You know what happened in Lord Reading's time.

H. N. B. Apart from this question of control, is there any hope of legislation on behalf of your "half-starved millions" if the Princes are to nominate 40 per cent of the membership of the Federal Legislature?

G. We can deal with them as we have dealt with you. It will be much easier.

H. N. B. I think their reply would be rather more brutal than ours. We used the lathi. They would use the rifle.

G. That's your race pride. That's right. I like you for it. All of us ought to have it. But you don't realize how much British power in India rests on prestige. Indians are hypnotized by it. You are a brave race, and your reputation enables you to overawe us. I've seen the same thing in South Africa. The Zulus are a fighting race and yet a Zulu will tremble at the sight of a revolver, even if it isn't loaded. If we get into conflict with the Princes, they won't have the advantage of your prestige. If our people have to face Mahratta troops, they will say to themselves: 'We are Mahrattas, too.' Talking of South Africa gives me a precedent for the change that we want to bring about in our relations with the Princes. Swaziland used to be under the control of Downing Street, but when the Union was formed control was transferred to it. In the same way we argue that the Princes ought to be transferred to the control of an Indian Government.

THE ARTIST: Will you have any use for British goods when India is free?

G. Yes, we shall still want what you export, with one exception. We shall want everything except cotton goods. Those we must make ourselves.

H. N. B. A considerable part of our exports consists of machinery. Will you have use for that?

G. Certainly. Why, I use machinery myself for making soap and I imported it from England. It is only the devoted few who can live the simple life without machinery. The masses will never do without it. All the same, it is possible to do without it. Most of the things that we were taught to consider necessary are not necessary at all. Take soap, now. I've used one cake of soap for three months, and it isn't nearly finished yet. It is not really necessary to keep the body nice, though I used to think so myself, and used it lavishly when I was a young man. Civilization, a cultured life with a place in it for literature and the arts, is possible without the artificial wants the machinery has created. But I don't deceive myself: I know that the masses will never lead such a life. It is for the few.

It's amazing how these absurd artificial wants swell the volume of trade. I've learnt that from the boycott. Who would have thought that toys and Chinese fireworks mattered? Yet you export vast quantities of such things into India. We have learned in these months the tremendous power of the boycott; indeed, we are only just beginning to realize it fully now. When I started it I was thinking only of cloth, but all manner of little trades are involved as well, even perfumes. I'm sorry for all the little people who were hurt by it, though I don't care so much about the big combines in Lancashire.

H. N. B. Yes, the boycott had a great effect. If you go back, the British attitude towards Indian self-government seems almost incredible.

G. Yes, you have advanced. But you are not yet ready to give us freedom. It won't be this time. India will have to wait some months longer. I don't expect anything from this Conference. I came because I gave Lord Irwin my promise to attend it and discuss everything.

THE ARTIST: You don't suppose we'll go till you send us away.[1]

[1] The remark was occasioned by Muriel Lester reminding Gandhiji that several Indian callers were waiting to see him.

G. (Laughing) Just now I agree with your General Dyer. You remember his great saying that the life of one Englishman was worth a thousand Indians. I have always admired his outspokenness. Well, for me just now one Englishman is worth a thousand Indians.

The Manchester Guardian, 13-10-1931

109. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 12, 1931

MY DEAR HENRY,

Yes, I have read the *Times* report. I am not guilty. There being nothing conclusive about the conversations what could I report! I did report the relevant part to the informal committee. Like all *Times* reports, this is one-sided, inspired and mischievous. Far more mischievous things have appeared in that paper and it has ignored contradictions. But the being shocked of friends matters. How to remedy the mischief I do not know. Step into the breach and show the way. I am too shy to push myself forward. I have no secrets of my own. I am anxious to meet all friends and receive their help and offer them such services as are within my power.

You know the disease, you know me and the complainants. You should find the remedy and apply it.

Love.

BHAI

From a photostat: S.N. 18063

110. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 12, 1931

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got the letters from you all, but I simply get no time here to write. You should, therefore, be satisfied with what the other four members of the party write.

Today is Monday and the Committee is not meeting. That is how I have the time to write this letter. There are, of course,

some persons sitting near me, but they are talking among themselves and I am writing this while they are doing so.

I see that Chhaganlal and you are not able to work together in any matter. Have a talk with him now. He is unhappy. If nothing comes of your talk, the matter will have to wait till I return.

How is it that Jamna has again fallen ill?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Surajbhan's story is pathetic. He must have calmed down now. I understand what you say about Rukmini.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

111. SPEECH AT NATIONAL LABOUR CLUB RECEPTION[1]

LONDON,
October 12, 1931

He thanked Mr. Henderson for . . . "taking the trouble to come to this meeting to show what support and sympathy I am to expect from you". Mr. Gandhi invited his audience to ask questions, and said that frank speaking was the most helpful. He said he would answer the questions without any mental reservations. Continuing, Mr. Gandhi said:

Though I am here for the Conference, I believe my work lies outside the Conference in making contacts like this. In the Conference, however anxious I am to pour out my heart and lay all my cards on the table, I, like every other delegate, am subjected to certain restrictions which I must observe. I am, therefore, not successful in presenting my whole case. Even though I believe I may have to go empty-handed, in spite of all my efforts for an amicable settlement, I shall have the fullest satisfaction if I have been able to present my case to those who are earnest about India, but unfortunately are not fully informed about the Congress. I claim that Congress represents in an overwhelming manner the masses of India, and I ask you to accept it that I have come here to plead for that independence for which thousands and thousands of men and women courted imprisonment, received lathi blows, and for which some even laid down their precious lives. Complete independence does not exclude partnership on

[1] The reception was arranged at Caxton Hall. Arthur Henderson presided.

an absolute equality basis with Great Britain, terminable by either party.

Mr. Gandhi then stated the Congress claim, and the discretion that he was permitted to exercise in the matter of reservation and safeguards.

He added that Lord Irwin, of all Englishmen, was able to draw him to England. Referring to safeguards in the interests of India, Mr. Gandhi said that the safeguards would be in mutual interest, as he would not have adjustments that did moral harm to Britain, though some of them might mean material loss.

We in India have come to the conclusion that some of the transactions of the British Government are of questionable character, causing terrible economic loss to the Indian people. It is necessary that in doing belated justice to India, Britain must suffer some material loss.

Concluding, Mahatma Gandhi expressed the fervent hope that the future historian would say that India fought and won liberty without shedding blood.[1]

Q. If we withdrew entirely the control of the British Army in India, would there not be internecine strife between Hindus and Muslims and would it not materialize into a serious and terrible condition? People from India assure me that that would be the case.

A. It is a good question and it is a question that has been asked on so many occasions ever since I have come here and in India also.

My answer is that it is possible. It is likely that we the Hindus and Muslims may fight one another if the British Army is withdrawn. Well, if such is to be our lot, I do not mind it. It is quite likely. Only if we don't go through the ordeal now, it will simply be postponement of the agony and, therefore, I personally do not mind it a bit and the whole of the Congress which today sways the votes or the minds of millions of people has decided to run the risk of it. At the same time, my own hope is that, if we are really fighting non-violently and truthfully, we shall be able to avoid that calamity. But what puzzles me is this: Why should British administrators or the British general public worry their heads about what is going to happen when the British Army is withdrawn? Why would they not recall their own history? Did the British people themselves not run the maddest risks imaginable in order to retain their liberty? Did they not

[1] The report up to this point is from *Indian News*. What follows is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

have the terrible Wars of the Roses? Did they not fight, the English against the Scots? Was there not fighting even between Englishmen and Irishmen? If you keep a foreign rule imposed, you will find the rot of emasculation going deeper and deeper and you come to the impossible barrier that these people cannot defend themselves against each other and therefore we must remain there as eternal rulers. Therefore I would rather run any risk that may be in store and get freedom today.

Q. What is it exactly that the two parties of Hindus and Muslims are afraid of?

A. I don't know that Hindus and Muslims have raised this question. Not that they have not that fear, but the question has been raised on behalf of the administrators and not on behalf of the Indians or India as I know.

But I shall give you what is today activating the Hindu-Muslim mind. The Hindus, who have been called "the gentle Hindu" —which is often considered a euphemism for cowardice—unfortunately have the fear that it is possible that when British troops are withdrawn, hordes from the North-West may overrun India and may inflict all kinds of losses upon her. There is certainly that fear, but we must run that risk.

Muslims say they are less literate, less numerous and not as well-off economically as the Hindus. Therefore, they d know what is going to happen to them. The Hindus, after all, before the British came, were able to live with the Mussalmans on free and equal terms. There are today several thousand villages in India and in the majority of these there is a very sparse Muslim population.

They are, however, living together in perfect peace among themselves. Go to the Punjab and Bengal and throw in Sind, you will find thousands of villages where the predominant population is Muslim with a few Hindus. Ask me if those Hindus are afraid of their very lives. If they were afraid, they would not be living in those villages.

If you go to Baluchistan, overwhelmingly Muslim, you will find solitary Hindus carrying on trade there and, generally speaking, you can accept my evidence that they are not living in fear of their lives. Again, you would find in Kabul not one but numerous Hindus and more Sikhs.

It comes to this that this so-called fear is really more or less manufactured and is not so much fear as the desire for the exercise of power. It is not a high ambition, I admit, but no one

is free from this ambition in the world—not even the Labour Party.

Q. Bearing in mind the developments of the smaller States of Europe which have been granted their freedom since the War, does not Mr. Gandhi think that there is a danger of India, if she pursues her present policy, developing a bellicose nationalism which will be a menace to the world? And does not Mr. Gandhi think it would be a dangerous ideal that he would be willing to sacrifice a million lives in order to attain freedom?

A. I do not think it to be a dangerous ideal to sacrifice your own life and these precious lives will be sacrificed by a nation that is living in compulsory disarmament. I am afraid that our friend has not perhaps listened as carefully as I would have expected, or to speak chivalrously, I was not capable of making my meaning quite clear.

India today is wedded to non-violence and therefore there is no question of taking someone else's life. We do not consider our lives so cheap as to be given away for nothing, but we do not consider our lives to be dearer than liberty itself, and therefore, if we had to sacrifice a million lives, we would do so tomorrow, and God above would say nothing but 'Well done my children'.

We are trying to gain our liberty; you, on the other hand, have been an imperialistic-minded race. You have been in the habit of committing frightfulness—and as the late General Dyer put it in answer to a question in Court: "Yes, I did this frightfulness deliberately." I am here to say that General Dyer was not the only one capable of resorting to this frightfulness.

You don't want me to multiply these illustrations from your own history, therefore, I do not think anyone in this Hall would criticize us if we sacrificed ourselves in this attempt to gain our liberty. It is up to you, those who are trustees of the honour of the British nation, to prevent this disaster if you can.

My purpose in making these contacts is to put before you the elementary position and say: 'This is India's right.'

Q. Would we not be making a mistake in giving you independence?[1]

A. I think you would if you gave independence to anyone. And please therefore remember that I have not come to beg for independence but I have come as a result of last year's suffering and at the end of that suffering, time came when we left India in order to see whether we have now sufficiently impressed the British

[1] The question is taken from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" in *Young India*, 29-10-1931.

mind with our suffering, so that I can go away with an honourable settlement.

But if I go away with an honourable settlement, I shall not go away with the belief that I have received any gift from this nation.

There is no such thing as a gift of independence from one nation to another. It has got to be gained and bought with one's blood and I feel that we have already spilt sufficient of our own blood in the process which has gone on deliberately since 1919. But it may be that God, in His grace, considers that we have not suffered enough, that we have not gone through the process of purification.

Then I am here to testify that we shall continue the process of self-sacrifice until at last no Britisher will want to remain in India as a ruler.

Q. What are Mr. Gandhi's comments on the current belief that if the British withdrew from India, the Russians would wish to extend their sphere of influence by force over the country?

A. I must confess to you that I do not believe in this for one moment. Suppose Russia has such unholy designs upon India and thinks that she will succeed Britain in establishing an Empire there, I can only say that the same means which would have convinced the British of the impossibility of governing and the wisdom of withdrawing their Rule from India, will be the means that we propose successfully to adopt against Russia.

Imagine for one moment what Russia can possibly do against an unwilling people. No people have yet been governed by another nation against their will. I hope and I believe my people have learned that co-operation need not be rendered even reluctantly. It carries with it some measure of sacrifice—a sacrifice involving that non-co-operation.

If we refuse to trade with the Russians, take their goods and their titles, receive their money, what will the Russians do or any other nation on earth do? I admit that at the present moment India is not prepared to war against any nation, but I am hoping that I shall be able to utilize the opportunity to take my people along another step.

If you are satisfied that we have really suffered enough, that we have got unique means at our disposal in order to protect ourselves against foreign aggression and exploitation through this non-co-operation and satyagraha; if you are satisfied, you will help me to gain this liberty for my people and you will find that

people who have been able to gain liberty through these means are able to retain it through these means, then you will find that India will have made the largest contribution possible to the war against war.

Indian News, 15-10-1931, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30-10-1931

112. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
October 13, 1931

I do not want to be aggressive. I maintain that the failure to discover a solution for the communal question is largely due to want of knowledge about the new constitution and also to the unrepresentative character of delegates. The Government know only too well that the Congress is the only body which can deliver the goods. What then is the use of their pretending that the Congress is one among different groups, namely, Hindus, Depressed Classes, Christians, landlords, zamindars? When the struggle was in progress, the Hindu Sabha was not different from the Congress. I am certain that if a referendum is held today, the Hindus and Depressed Classes will by overwhelming majority be found to be in sympathy with the Congress. I am certain that the Nationalist Muslims will render a good account of themselves. If I had my own way, I certainly would surrender to the Muslims, but it will be of no use for the Government to exaggerate the differences which are largely due to the composition of the delegation which is their own action. If the Government is genuinely not in favour of framing a constitution prior to a communal settlement, I invite them to put their hand to the plough. I am prepared to co-operate with the Government on the minimum terms which the Congress is prepared to accept. The Congress insists on the fullest control of the army, foreign policy and finance. The Government have the choice to accept or reject the Congress demands.

I do not expect the Government to solve the Indian question at this Conference, but am participating in it in the fulfilment of the promise that I gave Lord Irwin to discuss every issue and I value the contacts outside the Conference more.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-10-1931

113. SPEECH AT INDIAN STUDENTS' MEETING[1]

LONDON,
October 13, 1931

Gandhiji, after reiterating India's fundamental claims, said he knew before starting that these were not likely to be granted because no nation ever yet obtained its lost freedom by mere appeal to reason. Something much more serious had always been required. He did not suppose India would be an exception. It was now plainer than ever that only through suffering would victory be won, but his hope was that the suffering already endured might have created a sufficient impression on the British mind favourable to reason and negotiation.

I must confess that, as I go on, I feel the task Herculean. Probably nothing would come out of it, but being an optimist, I would not give up hope in its entirety until I find nothing more can be done. Still I pray the seed being sown now will bear fruit in the conscience of this country and the Ministers will feel compelled to come to terms with the nation of sufferers.[2]

It may be that the seed which is being sown now may result in softening the British spirit and that it may result in the prevention of the brutalization of human beings. I have known the English nature in its hideous form in the Punjab. I have known it elsewhere also, during these fifteen years of experience and through history, I have known the same thing happening. It is my purpose by every means at my command to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in preventing the sufferings of my own people.

I have often gloated over the sufferings of my own people. I know that people, who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see

[1] The meeting took place in Gower Street Hostel, Bloomsbury. Sir Ewart Greaves of the Indian Y.M.C.A. was in the chair.

[2] What follows is extracted form Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" in *Young India*.

human nature dragged in the mire. If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being, how much more so in Englishmen, amongst whom I count numerous friends! I invite you to give all the help you can in the endeavour that I am making.

To the Indian students my appeal is to study this question in all thoroughness and, if you really believe in the power of non-violence and truth, then, for God's sake express these two things in your daily life—not merely in the political field—and you will find that whatever you do in this direction will help me in the struggle. It is possible that Englishmen and Englishwomen who come into close touch with you will assure the world that they have never seen students so good, so truthful, as Indian students. Don't you think that that would go a long way towards vindicating our nation? The words "self-purification" occurred in a Congress Resolution in 1920. From that moment the Congress realized that we were to purify ourselves. We were by self-sacrifice to purify ourselves so that we would deserve liberty and so that God would also be with us. If that is the case, every Indian whose life bears testimony to the spirit of self-sacrifice helps his country, without having to do anything more. Such, in my opinion, is the strength of the means which the Congress adopted. Therefore, in the battle for freedom, every student here need do nothing more than that he should purify himself and present a character above reproach and above suspicion.

Q. Lord Irwin is reported to have said in a speech at the Central Hall that he knew you would not insist on Complete Independence. Is this true?

A. Well: In the first instance, I do not know that Lord Irwin made the speech which is imputed to him. Secondly, I must not speak for Lord Irwin. That would be a question well addressed to him. But I never told Lord Irwin that I would not press for Complete Independence. On the contrary, so far as my memory serves me right, I told him that I would press for Complete Independence, and, for me that does not mean ruling India through deputies, i.e., Indian agents rather than English agents. Complete independence to me means National Government.

Q. How do you reconcile Complete Independence with the retention of British troops?

A. British troops may remain in India and that would depend upon the arrangement that the partners came to. This, for a limit-

ed period, would be to the interests of India because India has become emasculated and it is necessary to retain some portion of British troops or some portion of British officers under the National Government and in the employ of the National Government. I shall defend the partnership and yet defend the retention of those troops.

Q. Do you envisage a Viceroy when you speak of an Independent India?

A. Whether the Viceroy remains is a question to be decided by both the parties. Speaking for myself, I cannot conceive a Viceroy remaining. But I can conceive a British Agent remaining there because there would be so many interests which the British have brought into being there which I personally do not seek to destroy and, in order to represent those interests and if there is also an army consisting of British troops and officers, I could not possibly say, 'No, there will not be a British Agent.' And since there are also the Princes concerned I cannot vouchsafe for what the Princes will do and, therefore, I do not expect that under the scheme I have in mind there will be no British Agent there — whether he is called a Viceroy or a Governor-General. But I would defend it as a partnership having the condition that it is to be terminated at the will of either on terms of absolute equality. I am writing on a slate from which I have to rub out many things.

Q. What are the common objects that such a partnership would advance?

A. The common object that the partnership is going to advance is to cease the exploitation of the races of the earth. If India becomes free from this curse of exploitation, under which she has groaned for so many years, it would be up to India to see that there is no further exploitation. Real partnership would be of mutual benefit. It would be a partnership between two races the one having been known for its manliness, bravery, courage and its unrivalled powers of organization, and the other an ancient race possessing a culture perhaps second to none, a continent in itself. A partnership between these two peoples cannot but result in mutual good and be to the benefit of mankind.[1]

Dealing lengthily with the communal problem, he said he was incapable of bargaining away the rights of minorities and insisted again that the Congress was predominantly representative of the dumb millions.

The golden rule is: Believe just the contrary of what the newspapers say on such matters. What I have been trying to do is to persuade Hindus and Sikhs to give Muslims what they want

[1] What follows is from *The Hindu*.

and persuade Muslims to so frame their demands as to make them acceptable to other communities.

Regarding smaller minorities, he pointed out the part played by the Parsis in Bombay as an example of what numerically insignificant communities could do without special advantages and what great opportunities adult suffrage would provide all alike.

The most determined opposition to the claims of untouchables and other minorities except Muslims and Sikhs was expressed by Mr. Gandhi. He said:

I shall resist those claims at the cost of my life and I appeal to you to join me in shaming the delegates into withdrawing them.

He denied that he had offered to accept the demands of Mussalmans if they would join him in resisting the demands of untouchables. He said he was forced to agree to Muslim and Sikh demands for historical reasons, but he would not agree to the grant of special representation to any other community in any circumstances.

The manifestations of goodwill by people in England had convinced him that the English people would never again tolerate repression in India. If it became necessary for Indians to resume passive resistance and non-co-operation, he appealed to the students to behave themselves and win the respect of the English people.

The Hindu, 14-10-1931, and *Young India*, 29-10-1931

114. *CABLE TO DR. M. A. ANSARI*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
[Before *October 14, 1931*][1]

DR. ANSARI
DARYAGANJ
DELHI

HAVE HAD THREE PAINFUL CONVERSATIONS OVER YOU WITH NO FRUITFUL RESULT. TOLD THEM COULD NOT ENDORSE THEIR DEMAND WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT AND THAT YOUR HELP NECESSARY MOMENT TO MOMENT. HAVE AGREED HOWEVER ASSIST EVERY EFFORT FOR SETTLEMENT EVEN WITHOUT YOU THOUGH WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18217

[1] The source does not give the date. But Gandhiji makes a reference to the "handicap" of Dr. Ansari's absence in his statement to the Press of October 14, 1931; *vide* p. 150.

115. STATEMENT TO "THE ISLAND"[1]

LONDON,
[On or before *October 14, 1931*][2]

The movement of artists and poets who are endeavouring to free themselves from the shackles of commercial and industrial influences of this age is a most laudable venture if only they have strength enough to do it. Religion is the proper and eternal ally of art. What religion teaches people the artist brings near to them in form on the plastic plane. I hate "art for art's sake", which I think is a lamentable aberration of the human mind. Art has a profound similarity with religion inasmuch as the fundamental experience in both of them belongs to the domain of man's relationship with God. Indian art symbolizes this relationship and at the same time expresses the ritual of religious worship. If an artist who thinks he is surrounded by people without any religious sentiment chooses to become a scoffer, he will inevitably frustrate his own vocation. On the other hand if he feels that his is a mission, then a poet or artist has a right to oppose the prevalent creed or lack of creed and he will be justified by the greater value of his own revelation. I do not pretend to know anything about art, but I believe firmly that both religion and art have to serve the identical aims of moral and spiritual elevation. The central experience of life will for ever remain the relationship which man has to God and it will never be superseded or replaced by anything else, just as human bodies will never free themselves from the law of gravitation. In this relationship of man to God it is the mysterious forces which matter, not the meagre texts expressed in words. There may be changes in this relationship of man to God as represented by the various and

[1] Gandhiji made the statement in conversation with the Editor, Joseph Bard. The latter made a record of it and submitted the script for Gandhiji's approval. Gandhiji approved it, except for the last paragraph which read: "Both the priestlike and the artistic human beings aspire to what is sacred and, when the vulgar mind pities them for the sacrifices they make, they forget that for both of them a sacrifice retains the joyous meaning of its origin—the road towards the sacred."

[2] *The Island* gave the date-line October 14.

successive religions of mankind; but to quote Cardinal Newman: "One step enough for me."

From a photostat: G.N. 1055-a

116. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
October 14, 1931

Though it is a matter for deep sorrow that the negotiations for a communal settlement failed, I have not given up hope of success.

In spite of the Premier's energetic disclaimer, I still hold that the causes of the failure were inherent in the composition of the Conference. I am more than ever convinced that the framing of a constitution should not depend on the previous settlement of the communal question. It was, therefore, wrong for the Premier to suggest that further progress in constitution-making largely depended on the communal settlement. In judging events here the Indian public will do well to bear in mind these two defects in Government procedure; they will then not become nervous each time there is failure.

I have had several protracted conversations with the Muslim Delegation, but we could not come to a final conclusion. I have felt the absence of Dr. Ansari a severe handicap, but he will be of no real use unless the Muslim Delegation desires or approves of his selection as a delegate.

The position I have taken up is of a double character. In an individual capacity I have retained my original position, namely, to concede all to all parties, but, as a Congress delegate, I have endeavoured to act as an intermediary, up to now without success. I have made it clear I should have to receive the sanction of the Working Committee before I accept any scheme. I have made no reference to the Working Committee, as I have nothing definite before me.

At the same time I am keeping myself in touch with all parties. The moment I have anything on which I have to take action, I shall ask for instructions. Meanwhile, I would warn the public against being affected or agitated by newspaper reports.

The Hindu, 15-10-1931

117. *SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
October 14, 1931

MY LORD CHANCELLOR AND FRIENDS,

I have to tender my apology for intervening in the debate. It was my intention to request you to give me a few minutes at the end of this discussion for making a few brief remarks, but, as I listened to the discussion yesterday, I thought I might be able to make a suggestion which might remove the difficulty with which this Committee had to contend. I became more convinced than ever of this when Mr. Jinnah presented his difficulty, and therefore, it was that I requested you, Lord Chancellor, with apologies to Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad, to let me intervene and make a few remarks. I want to do so with a view to saving time if possible.

Before I proceed with my suggestion, I should like to tender my congratulations to Lord Peel's Subcommittee upon their labours and upon the exhaustive report they have given to us. I feel, however, that the Sub-committee aimed too high, and hence, quite unconsciously, threw an apple of discord in our midst. The reference is clearly to examine and report upon the general principles upon which the financial resources and obligations of India should be apportioned between the Federation, etc. Well, in my humble opinion, if the Sub-committee had not aimed too high, it could have presented us with a definite scheme. I sympathize with Mr. Jinnah's objection; but at the root of his objection is, I believe, a misunderstanding of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's presentation of his case—that is to say, if I have understood him correctly. Mr. Jinnah's objection is that, unless there was some sort of a scheme, there could be no Federation whatsoever. I think that that would be a fatal objection if it was true. If I have understood Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's contention correctly, it is that there should be a scheme, but that there might be, or should be, an Expert Committee to be brought into being by the Federal Government, if it ever comes into being, which could examine the whole question *de novo*, and present that Government with an

exhaustive report. Naturally, that report could be shelved, could be torn to pieces, examined by all the parties and, if it commended itself to them, it could be then adopted by the Federal Government. There was no question of embodying that report in any constitution. The constitution would have been framed before the Federal Government came into being. I personally confess that I do not envisage a constitution, to be framed by the greatest Parliament of the world, that would make us risk-proof and difficulties-proof. I believe that this Federal Government, if it comes into being, would be faced even in the very beginning with many difficulties with which it would have manfully to struggle; but I feel that it is not beyond the powers of this Sub-committee to give us an elementary scheme about which all parties are agreed. I do not mind how humble that scheme is, but it should be a scheme which would commend itself to the States. Let the States themselves decide, in consultation with the other members of this Conference, as to how far they are willing to go.

Let me illustrate what I am saying. Here, as they have started with a mention of the natural difficulties that they have to contend against, the whole of this Report is a tentative Report and for its finality it depends upon these two Expert Committees which have been suggested by the Subcommittee. What I feel is that, just as they have said in paragraph 10 that so many heads are marked "Federal", if they could sit again, and if this Report was referred back to them, they would then come, not with a tentative suggestion, but with an agreed suggestion that so many items of revenue would be Federal. Even if there was an Expert Committee appointed, we would certainly not get absolutely accurate figures. Absolutely accurate figures can only be had after the event has happened—after the revenues have been collected—but we should have something to go by. I venture to suggest that such a thing is not necessary for our purpose before we can come to an agreement as to what items shall be or shall not be considered to be Federal; and so I simply take up these items and I say, let them concentrate upon these items to the exclusion of everything else and say definitely, 'Yes, External Customs, including Export duties, shall be Federal' or 'shall not be Federal'. Then they would know immediately what are the sources of revenue. Similarly, let them sit together and say, 'These will be the obligations that shall be Federal', and let the States decide for themselves. After all, it is they who are invited to come, or who have volunteered to come. I welcome gratefully

the assurance given by His Highness of Bhopal, as also by His Highness of Bikaner. My sympathies are entirely with Sir Akbar Hydari when he says that he cannot possibly, either on behalf of Hyderabad or on behalf of the States' Delegation, take a leap in the dark. Let there, therefore, be no leap in the dark; and, in order to avoid such a catastrophe, let there be just now a very humble scheme of participation, and let us launch that humble scheme. Then it would be open to the Federal Government—and there should be sufficient elasticity, for which His Highness of Bhopal pleaded, in the constitution itself to enable the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament—to take on what burdens they chose to take on. We do not want a cast-iron constitution, out of which we can never get, or to which we may never make any addition or amendment. If we have an elastic constitution, then it will be open to the Federal Government, as it gains experience, to appoint, not one Expert Committee, but ten Expert Committees to examine many things; and then the Federal Government, as it begins its march, will shoulder further responsibilities, and as it proceeds to shoulder responsibilities it will also have further avenues of revenue to be derived from various sources. If once the thing is launched, I anticipate no difficulty and no trouble of any kind whatsoever.

Therefore my concrete suggestion, if it commends itself to you, is that we refer this Report back to the Subcommittee with thanks, and ask the Subcommittee, with the material at its disposal, to give us a minimum scheme to which the States agree; and that we accept that scheme as a scheme to start with, without any encumbrance in the shape of Expert Committees. If we do that, we meet entirely Mr. Jinnah's objection, I think. We meet also the legitimate fears of Sir Akbar Hydari; and, what is more to the point for a man like me, we waste no more time even on a matter which is of importance. I must confess to you that I dread a committee which might report in twelve months' time or even in three months' time or even in one month's time or three weeks' time. I think that this Conference has been called upon to shoulder a particular burden. It should manfully shoulder that burden and not throw responsibilities upon any further committees. Whatever we can hammer into shape we should present to His Majesty's Government, to the Parliament, and to the people of India also; but I think that, unless we approach the task in this manner, so far as I can see, we shall certainly never see light out of what appears to me to be impenetrable darkness at the present moment.

That really is the reason why I have intervened. I think that I have sufficiently explained the suggestion that I have ventured to place before this Committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 192-3

118. LETTER TO ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 15, 1931

DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

It was a pleasure to receive your letter for which Mr. Andrews had prepared me this morning. I shall present myself at the Palace at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 20th. I was most anxious to make your acquaintance and discuss with you the mission that has brought me here.

I quite agree with you that our conversation should be confined to us two only.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 18108

119. EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING[1]

LONDON,
October 15, 1931

SIR MANECKJEE DADABHOY: My Lord, the Mahatma goes further and says that his concrete suggestion is, if it commends itself to the meeting, to refer this Report back to the Sub-committee with thanks, and ask the Subcommittee, with the material at its disposal, to give the Conference a minimum scheme to which the States agree, and that we should accept that scheme as a scheme to start with, without any encumbrance in the shape of an Expert Committee. The Mahatma, however, did not make clear what he meant by a minimum scheme. I am still at a loss to understand what is meant by a minimum scheme. I have

[1] The subject discussed was distribution of financial resources between the Federation and its units.

however, a graver constitutional objection. If you are going to put the Federation into operation, you cannot do it by a patch-work system and you cannot work on a piecemeal basis. If the Federation is to come into operation, it should be a full, complete, all-absorbing Federation, which will leave no room for doubt or difficulty. You cannot make arrangements for a sort of partial Federation. If the Federation is to be brought about, moreover, it must be in conformity with the general principles which underlie all such federations. Moreover, does Mahatma Gandhi feel certain that, even if we have a minimum scheme, the Indian States are going to agree to that?

MR. GANDHI: That is the crux of my scheme.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 205

120. SPEECH AT STUDENTS MEETING[1]

LONDON,
[*October 15, 1931*][2]

FELLOW STUDENTS,

I have been speaking to people on all sorts of things, but principally on the mission that has brought me here and by this time you know by heart what I have to say in connection with my mission. I had not intended to speak to you on any special subject. So I said to myself: Perhaps I shall best utilize our time in answering questions instead of wasting it by a set address.

You may put me any question you like. If I do not know the subject on which you ask me, I shall frankly confess my ignorance. Barring that, you will not embarrass me. It will be an act of courtesy on your part if you are frank towards me. I have addressed you as "Fellow Students". It is not a formula. I regard myself essentially as a student and if you are wise, as I am (Laughter), in after life you will regard yourselves as students.

Throughout my varied experiences of life, I have come to the conclusion that our student life commences after we leave our Colleges and Universities and Law Chambers where we are supposed to be studying tied down to our studies with the key to our knowledge and, when we leave these premises, we practi-

[1] The meeting was held at the International Students' Movement House, Russell Square. About 200 students hailing from all parts of the world were present.

[2] The date is according to Mahadev Desai's Diary.

cally forget all that we have learnt. It is really in after life that we have to unlearn many things. The so-called student's life is merely a preparation for real life of a student. When you are in college or anywhere else, you have got set subjects. Even in optional subjects you have to learn them in a particular fashion because you are definitely bound down[1]. But after that stage is over, you are free like a bird with wings to soar high and, the higher you soar, the stronger you become. So I am still a student who has not graduated in the world.

When you are buffetted about and thrown on your resources, it becomes a tough job. If you give yourselves to study, if you dedicate yourselves to study, to eternal research, there is no limit to joy, there is no limit to pleasure that you derive from that study. My study consistently has been the search after Truth. During the early days of my study and search I could not consistently find Truth unless I invited injury against myself and not against others. I could find Truth only when I eschewed all feeling of causing injury to others, but, when necessary, inflicting it on myself. Because, as you must be knowing, Truth and violence are opposed to each other: Violence hides Truth and, if you try to find Truth by violence, you will betray horrible ignorance in the search of Truth and, therefore, non-violence without any exception whatsoever. I have come to realize the essence of life, that is ahimsa.

With this brief introduction I leave myself at your disposal. You are at liberty to put me all kinds of questions.

A NEGRO STUDENT FROM GOLD COAST: On your way to Dandi, you advised the police and headmen to resign—policemen bound by allegiance to Government. You also asked Gurkhas to disobey orders. Is it not contrary to non-violence?

GANDHIJI: Interesting question, but shows superficial knowledge. But that cannot be helped because this philosophy could not be studied from books. No contradiction. In the first instance, I asked the village headman to resign if it is assumed that he knew that he was serving a Government which was doing wrong. And there cannot be a vow or promise or determination to do wrong. It is like the vow or determination of a man or woman to smoke 50 cigars a day or drink 2 bottles of whisky per day or before taking his meal to take one human life—it cannot be a vow. If a policeman enlists himself in service of a Government which does wrong, it is his bounden duty to leave the service; so I under-

[1] The source has "hide-bound".

took to preach to the people that they were doing violence to themselves and to their country and doing disservice to the Government themselves. The consequence was imprisonment which they should put up with without murmur. There was in this no breach of truth or non-violence. It was a good thing on their part and on my part.

I now leave the village headmen and Dandi policemen and go to the Punjab. The Garhwali soldiers received orders from their superiors. I have never condemned that as an act of violence. That too was a patriotic act. They got imprisonment which was worse. It was breach of discipline and some of them were sentenced under Martial Law. While I admire them for having refused to shoot their countrymen and still suffering, I shall have to ask for mercy which, as a Civil Resister, I cannot do.

If the reins of Government were given in charge of the Congress, the Congress would discharge them tomorrow. As there is no law in the reason, there is no contradiction. He who knows the whole history can fling in my face the whole settlement. They did so. Some countrymen thoughtlessly asked me to get these men discharged. But I said 'No'. It was no part of the Congress campaign that such soldiers should commit breach of discipline. The Congress had issued no such instructions. They were not civil resisters and remember every patriotic man is not a civil resister necessarily, nor every resister is a patriotic man.

A RUSSIAN STUDENT: If you were less religious, would you not have come to an agreement quicker?

G. Oh, I understand your question. You want to suggest that I should make a promise and break it (Laughter). It is a very good definition of politicians (Laughter). I can now tell you why I entered politics. I entered politics to free politics from the reproach. As a rule the politician is free from any law suit. But I thought that would not do. Politics like a snake's coil surrounds, crushes you and seeing that I am in the midst of it, I realize my helpless plight, and I endeavour to control politics. I am supposed to be managing somehow or other the largest organization of the world—the Indian National Congress. It represents today millions of human beings who respond to its call. If the Congress really and truly carries out the political work on [the lines of] non-violence and truth, politicians will come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to make false promises and that politics becomes corrupted when you resort to any such means. Because some religious men are bad, it is a wrong deduction to

say that religion is bad. That is a hopelessly false position to take and, because politicians resort to ways that are crooked, it is wrong to say that politics cannot be improved.

Mr. Keir Hardie felt out of fatigue that the House of Commons was not a good place for a true Christian because the majority of the House were bad: but that is wrong. We must stand up for forlorn causes and we will be wholly justified in being in the House of Commons for fighting for them. It is not given to human beings to command success, but it is given to every one of us to command effort. At the same time do not forget it is arrogance to pretend to do everything by your own effort alone, because you cannot bend even a blade of grass. Before you do that, your hand may become paralysed as life is so uncertain. We are at the mercy of God. We should give up all ambition. Be truthful at any cost and make efforts, and leave the results to God.

A KOREAN STUDENT: Why are you [not] opposed to police, or State or army on ground of non-violence?

G. I admit the inconsistency. If I said that army was essential for a State, it would be inconsistent. Whilst I can invite all States to do without police or army, I have not yet been able to bring myself to believe that you can preserve a society without police. If we would suffer thieves or robbers to go about in society, I can conceive a society without police. Tolstoy has conceived of Dukhobors. There are people all over the world not needing police protection. But they should admit that they would not even lead that life unless they were in ordered surroundings. This is not out of my scheme, but I am at present hooked on to my limited work. You can thus say that my toleration of police is a limitation of non-violence. Army is opposed to non-violence. In one case it is my want of courage, in the other it is my inability to convince my people to do without an army. I have not mustered sufficient strength to pit non-violence against thieves and scoundrels and cut-throats but I can ask people to pit non-violence against hordes of the army. If perchance India wins her deliverance through non-violence, we may perhaps show to the world that it is not necessary to have an army State—I do not regard it Utopian to think of a State without an army, but it requires a higher degree of courage and purity.

AN ENGLISH STUDENT: Your people live on land, our people live on work. They cannot carry on strikes indefinitely. What is your remedy?

G. This is truly an embarrassing question. It is presumptuous for me to present a remedy. I am a perfect stranger in this

country, not knowing her circumstances. But as we are fellow-students, we can have exchange of views. I shall place my own views. I assure you, your distress distresses me too. If God gave me courage to put an end to it, I would willingly do it. Well, I have conducted strikes. I claim for myself that I am an expert in conducting strikes fairly successfully.

But one indispensable condition was that strikers must not live on charity, but they should live on their labour. Among those who advised them to strike and led them into it was a mill-owner's daughter[1] who worked with them in carrying sand for a building which the strikers built for a Municipality. On another occasion I was in jail, but my people gave the strikers enough work in hand-spinning and weaving and paid them wages for the work more than what they got in the market. They worked for eight hours worthy of getting enough to live. But the situation in London, where there is a well-organized society, it is difficult. But we are bound to surmount the difficulty because when there is a will, there is a way. Be ready and prepare not to live on charity. Find out ways and means.

To Englishmen who are conferring with me on this issue, I say: break up the highly organized industrialization. Go back to the villages. You have to revolutionize your conception of life. Your standard of life is artificial, incapable of sustaining for long. The modern civilization is a toy. You are increasing your standard of life. The more a man wants the more he becomes debased and breaks under. Well, an Englishman in Lancashire said, "I do not mind starvation but I have lost in my own estimation." I know of a man who was noble and patriotic, but because of his greed when he earned a million rupees, I did not congratulate him, but I sent him condolences. But later in life, he lost all, could not see anyone and ultimately drank a bowl of poison. Alas! such a noble good friend is lost today due to the ever-increasing wants. In order to adopt my method, you have to revise your mode of life, particularly you of the English race.

You are a race of exploiters. (Laughter)

Your King is the King of England and the Dominions; but he is the Emperor of India. That shows the pride lying behind it. You are therefore having false liberty. You have committed a series of crimes in order to bend Indians to your will compelling them to take your commodities. No wonder you are one of the richest countries. But where did you get your money from? Not in this

[1] Anasuyabehn Sarabhai; *vide* Vol. XIV, 215.

soil. It came from all parts of the Empire. Your people say they take interest in India. Why? Because so many people get employment there. What revolution I would like to suggest if you follow my plan is: revise your mode of life. Don't wait till you are compelled to do so. I have given you what is agitating my mind. Though I wanted to go my way, you yours, you have challenged me as fellow-students. So I have opened my heart.

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-10-1931. Also manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Couresy: Narayan Desai

121. *ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS*[1]

LONDON,
[Before *October 16, 1931*][2]

Q. If the Communal problem should not predominate over all the rest, why should you yourself have said, at one stage, that you would not think of going to the Round Table Conference, unless the Communal question was settled?

A. You are right. But you forget that I was borne down by the extreme pressure of English and other friends in India who said that it was imperative that I should go. I was also persuaded that, if only to keep my word of honour with Lord Irwin, I should go. Now, here I find myself face to face with men who are not nationalists, and who were selected only because they were communalists. Therefore, though I said that it was a matter of humiliation for us all not to have been able to come to a decision, the principal cause was the very composition of the committee itself. It is too unreal for words. There are men who claim to represent communities which, if they were in India, and if a referendum were to be taken, would disown them.

Q. What about the untouchables? Dr. Ambedkar was very severe on you and said that the Congress had no right to claim to represent the untouchables.

A. I am glad you have asked the question. I do not mind Dr. Ambedkar. He has a right even to spit upon me, as every

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". Desai says it is "not one talk, but bits from various talks".

[2] Elsewhere in "London Letter", Mahadev Desai says: "As I am writing this, the time is drawing near for a conference with temperance workers. . . ." This conference took place on October 16.

untouchable has, and I would keep on smiling if they did so. But I may inform you that Dr. Ambedkar speaks for that particular part of the country where he comes from. He cannot speak for the rest of India and I have numerous telegrams from the so-called 'untouchables' in various parts of India assuring me that they have the fullest faith in the Congress and disowning Dr. Ambedkar. And this confidence has a reason. They know the work that the Congress is doing for them and they know that, if they cannot succeed in making their voice felt, I would be prepared to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf and paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition, if there were such an opposition against them. On the other hand, if they were to be given special electorates, as Dr. Ambedkar persists in demanding, it would do that very community immense harm. It would divide the Hindu community into armed camps and provoke needless opposition.

Q. I see your point, and I have no doubt that you can legitimately speak for the untouchables. But you seem to ignore the fact that communities all the world over insist on being represented by their own people. The devoted Liberals of the north would truly represent the working men, but they would have their representatives from amongst themselves, and the great stubborn fact against you is that you are not an untouchable.

A. I know it very well. But the fact that I claim to represent them does not mean that I should think of representing them on the legislatures. By no means. I should have their own representatives drawn from their own class on the legislatures, and if they are left out, I should provide for their statutory co-option by the elected members. But when I am talking of representing them, I am talking of the representation on the Round Table Conference and I can assure you that, if anyone in India challenged our claim, I should gladly face a referendum and successfully.

Q. From this point of view it would be interesting to hear you about the Mussalmans too. You do not say that the Mussalmans here do not represent their community?

A. Well, they are not duly elected, and I may tell you that I asked so many of the real nationalist Mussalmans to stay away. There is a vast majority of the younger leaders—Mr. Khwaja, Mr. Sherwani, to name only two whom I came to know only through the friends who are today ranged against the Congress, and who are opposed to any Communal solution of the problem. Personally, I would give the Mussalmans all that they want and I have been waking up late after midnight in persuading the Hindus and the Sikhs to go with me, but I have failed. Do you think I

would have failed if the Sikhs were elected by the Sikhs and not nominated by Government? Master Tara Singh[1] would have been here. I know his views and he has his 17 points to pit against Mr. Jinnah's 14, but I am quite sure I could bear him down, as he is after all a comrade-in-arms. Is it surprising then that we should fail to achieve a settlement in the present atmosphere? It is, therefore, I said, that having already handicapped us, do not handicap us more by saying that the solution of the communal problem must precede any decision on the Constitutional question. I tell them let us know what we are going to get, so that on that basis I might endeavour to bring about unity even in the present ill-assorted group.

Let us for God's sake have something tangible. It would be another string to the bow and help us to arrive at a solution. For I could tell them that they were dashing a precious thing to pieces. But, today, I have nothing to present them with. And even if there were no solution, I have suggested various ways—private arbitration, judicial tribunal, etc. That is the situation. I am a slave to my friends, and it is because I honour Lord Irwin as a friend that I came. But I now see that it is an impossible situation.

Q. Is it quite impossible? You think you should not have come?

A. Not quite, and I am not going to give up my efforts until the last. As for my visit I do not at all feel sorry for having come, for I know that indirectly, out of the Conference, the work that I am doing is wholly satisfactory and I am establishing contacts which I shall treasure.

Q. May I take it then that you do not attach much importance to the communal question?

A. I have never said so. I say that the question has been allowed to overshadow the main thing, which needs to be specially emphasized.

Young India, 29-10-1931

[1] Sikh leader

122. INTERVIEW TO CALLENDER[1]

LONDON,
[October 16, 1931]

Q. Do you feel, Gandhiji, that mass production will raise the standard of living of the people?

A. I do not believe in it at all. There is a tremendous fallacy behind Mr. Ford's reasoning.[2] Without simultaneous distribution on an equally mass scale, the production can result only in a great world tragedy. Take Mr. Ford's cars. The saturation point is bound to be reached soon or late. Beyond that point the production of cars cannot be pushed. What will happen then?

Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass production were in itself a virtue, it should be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be definitely shown that mass production carries within it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop.

Q. I wonder whether you feel that this saturation point has already arrived in the Western world. Mr. Ford says that there never can be too many articles of quality, that the needs of the world are constantly increasing and that, therefore, while there might be saturation in the market for a given commodity, the general saturation would never be reached.

A. Without entering upon an elaborate argument, I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a round-about way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respec-

[1] An American Press correspondent. Pyarelal Nayar, from whose article "Mass Production *versus* Production by the Masses", this has been extracted, does not mention the name. This and the date of the interview have been taken from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931.

[2] The interviewer had earlier met Ford in America, who had put forward the view that demand for cheaper things would stimulate mass production.

tive areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation.

The American friend mentioned Mr. Ford's favourite plan of decentralization of industry by the use of electric power conveyed on wires to the remotest corner, instead of coal and steam, as a possible remedy, and drew up the picture of hundreds and thousands of small, neat, smokeless villages, dotted with factories, run by village communities. "Assuming all that to be possible", he finally asked Gandhiji, "how far will it meet your objection?"

A. My objection won't be met by that, because, while it is true that you will be producing things in innumerable areas, the power will come from one selected centre. That, in the end, I think, would be found to be disastrous. It would place such a limitless power in one human agency that I dread to think of it. The consequence, for instance, of such a control of power would be that I would be dependent on that power for light, water, even air, and so on. That, I think, would be terrible.

Q. . . . have you any idea as to what Europe and America should do to solve the problem presented by too much machinery?

A. You see that these nations are able to exploit the so-called weaker or unorganized races of the world. Once those races gain this elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more going to be exploited, they will simply be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear.

Q. As a world organization.

A. Yes.

Q. But even these races will require more and more goods as their needs multiply.

A. They will then produce for themselves. And when that happens, mass production, in the technical sense in which it is understood in the West, ceases.

Q. You mean to say it becomes local.

A. When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England today is the cloth shop of the world. It, therefore, needs to hold a world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change that I have envisaged, she would limit her production to the actual needs

of her 45 millions of population. When that need is satisfied, the production will necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold irrespective of the needs of a people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest, as is happening today, for instance, in America. America is today able to hold the world in fee by selling all kinds of trinkets, or by selling her unrivalled skill, which she has a right to do. She has reached the acme of mass production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps millions of people in America who live in misery, in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefited by this mass production.

Q. There the fault lies in distribution. It means that, whilst our system of production has reached a high pitch of perfection, the distribution is still defective. If distribution could be equalized, would not mass production be sterilized of its evils?

A. No, the evil is inherent in the system. Distribution can be equalized when production is localized; in other words, when the distribution is simultaneous with production. Distribution will never be equal so long as you want to tap other markets of the world to dispose of your goods. That does not mean that the world has no use for the marvellous advances in science and organization that the Western nations have made. It only means that the Western nations have to use their skill. If they want to use their skill abroad, from philanthropic motives, America would say, 'Well, we know how to make bridges, we won't keep it a secret, but we say to the whole world, we will teach you how to make bridges and we will charge you nothing.' America says, 'Where other nations can grow one blade of wheat, we can grow two thousand.' Then, America should teach that art free of charge to those who will learn it, but not aspire to grow wheat for the whole world, which would spell a sorry day for the world indeed.

The American friend next asked Gandhiji, referring to Russia, whether it was not a country that had developed mass production without exploiting, in Gandhiji's sense, the less industrialized nations, or without falling into the pit of unequal distribution.

A. In other words, you want me to express opinion on State-controlled industry, i.e., an economic order in which both production and distribution are controlled and regulated by the State as is being today done in Soviet Russia. Well, it is a new

experiment. How far it will ultimately succeed, I do not know. If it were not based on force, I would dote on it. But today, since it is based on force, I do not know how far and where it will take us.

Q. Then, you do not envisage mass production as an ideal future of India?

A. Oh yes, mass production, certainly, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning-wheel is that. It is mass production, but mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your 'mass production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?

Look, again, at another advantage, that this system affords. You can multiply it to any extent. But concentration of production *ad infinitum* can only lead to unemployment. You may say that workers thrown out of work by the introduction of improved machinery will find occupation in other jobs. But in an organized country where there are only fixed and limited avenues of employment, where the worker has become highly skilled in the use of one particular kind of machinery, you know from your own experience that this is hardly possible. Are there not over three millions unemployed in England today? A question was put to me only the other day: "What are we doing today with these three million unemployed?" They cannot shift from factory to field in a day. It is a tremendous problem.

Q. Would not machine agriculture make a great difference to India, as it has done to America and Canada?

A. Probably. But that is a question I do not consider myself fit to answer. We in India have not been able to use much complicated machinery in agriculture with profit so far. We do not exclude machinery. We are making cautious experiments. But we have not found power-driven agricultural machinery to be necessary.

Q. Some people have the impression that you are opposed to machinery in general. This is not true, I believe.

A. That is quite wrong. The spinning-wheel is also machinery. It is a beautiful work of art. It typifies the use of machinery on a universal scale. It is machinery reduced to the terms of the masses.

Q. So, you are opposed to machinery, only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few?

A. You are right. I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all.

Harijan, 2-11-1934

123. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

Q. Are you hopeful of a successful outcome?

A. Being an optimist, I never lose hope, but I can say that I am no nearer a solution than I was in Bombay. There are numerous difficulties. I know that the Congress demand appears a little too high in the atmosphere that is found to exist here, though I think that is none too high.

Q. Is there no way out of the difficulty?

A. There are many ways, but whether they will be adopted by the parties concerned, I do not know. We have been told that the solution of the constitutional question depends on the solution of the communal question. It is not true, and I am afraid, it is the very presentation of the question in this inverted form that has made the question more difficult and given it an altogether artificial importance, and because it has been made the fulcrum, the parties concerned feel that they can pitch their de-

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". The questions were asked at a luncheon given by American journalists at Savoy Hotel. Desai says: Gandhiji, in thanking them for it, described it as a delicate courtesy. He regaled them for some minutes with stories as to how journalists had misquoted him and how in one instance a misrepresentation had nearly cost him his life. The cup of bitterness, he said, would be full when, in the words of a journalist in India, they deliberately embellished truth itself with "a little bit of embroidery". He commended to them the motto of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

mands as high as possible. And thus, we are moving in a hideously vicious circle and the task of peace becomes more and more difficult. But I, for the life of me, see no vital connection at all between the two questions. India will have freedom whether the communal question is solved or not solved. No doubt we would have difficult times after the attainment of freedom, but freedom itself cannot be held up by the question, for we can get freedom as soon as we are worthy of it, and being worthy of it means suffering enough for it, paying a rich price for the rich prize of freedom. But if we have not suffered, if we have not paid the price, even a solution of the question would be of no help to us. If we have suffered enough, and offered sufficient sacrifices, no argument or negotiation would be necessary. But who am I to determine that we have suffered enough? In the hope that we had suffered enough, I came here and I am not at all sorry that I came here, for I find that my work lies outside the Conference and that is why—in spite of my numerous engagements—I agreed to come here, for this I regard as part of my work.

Q. Does not the General Election make your work difficult?

A. It need not. If British statesmen realized that the financial situation would be more difficult if there were a war between England and India, however non-violent, they would not allow the General Election to hamper the solution of our problem. They must realize that, in case India's demand is not granted, there is bound to be a fierce boycott, and all the attention of Great Britain will have to be absorbed in looking after her quickly-perishing trade interests in India. On the contrary, if there is an honourable partnership, Great Britain would be more free to mend her own affairs. But there is another very great difficulty in our way. So long as India is held by the bayonet, the British ministers will continue to cast their hungry eyes on the famishing masses of India and forging fresh means of draining the last ounce of silver and gold from India not necessarily by a malicious design, but forced by the necessity of the case, for when there is unemployment and want stalking the land and there is a chance of relief from some direction, no matter whether it is by exploiting another country, you cannot expect the statesmen to weigh everything in golden scales, and model their conduct on a strictly ethical code. It will drive them to desperate measures like manipulating India's currency. That may for a time put off the agony, but the ultimate doom cannot long be delayed.

Young India, 29-10-1931

124. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING[1]

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

MR. GANDHI: My Lord Chancellor, in view of the impending conversations between Their Highnesses or their representatives and Delegates on this side of the table, perhaps it is unnecessary for me to say anything in defence of the suggestion which I had the privilege of making before this Committee; but I would be unjust to Lord Peel and unjust to Sir Akbar Hydari (and I have listened with all the respect and attention which anything that Lord Peel or Sir Akbar Hydari might say deserves) if I did not confess that I am unconvinced and that I remain unrepentant. It may be that I am too obtuse to realize those difficulties; it may be that I am too impatient to see something concrete before us to see those difficulties; but I also know that I have confidence enough in myself and my countrymen to believe that we are well able to bear the burden and the responsibilities that self-government would impose upon us, and therefore I am not baffled by difficulties, real or imaginary.

But I want to apply my very simple mind to this question of apportionment of the revenue and the expenditure of the Government of India. We have been talking about principles. Well, I have really failed to see many principles in connection with the work before us. There is certainly one principle, namely, on what standard are we going to apportion the revenues and the expenditure? There certainly we shall have to come to some rough and ready principle on which we should decide; and that principle, as I visualize it before myself, is whether the British Indian part of India is to shoulder any additional burden beyond what it shoulders today by reason of Federation, and likewise whether the States are to do so, or whether, in entering upon Federation, each party will refuse, say, for the time being, to take over any further burdens. That, to my mind, would be the principle that would guide us in coming to an apportionment of revenue and expenditure.

[1] The Committee continued consideration of Head 4: Distribution of Financial Resources between the Federation and its Units.

The difficulty, therefore, really, that has appeared to me as a result of having listened to all these discourses, is one not of principle, but rather, if I may respectfully put it, of disinclination. If we have got the determination that we want Federation, that we want Federation at any cost consistently with the self-respect of each party, or each partner—if we have that determination I, again, as I say, as a simple man, a layman, can see no difficulty whatsoever. All we have to do is to find out those heads of revenue which we can easily understand without any complication, and we set about saying, 'These are the heads of the revenue which we shall hold jointly. The balance will go either to the Federal Government or to the Provinces.' That distribution can, in my opinion, easily be made. Today the greatest difficulty lies in bringing the States' and the other Delegates together and coming to a conclusion. If we lay down the principle that neither party is just now to bear any fresh burdens, we shall divide the heads accordingly; or if there is going to be a little give-and-take, each taking a little more responsibility, we shall arrive at a conclusion in accordance with that principle. Nor do I see any difficulty in finding what items of expenditure we are going to hold in common. If we have come to the conclusion that, at the present moment, we are going to have A, B and C sources of revenue, we know today, so far as our information permits us, that from these three sources we shall get so much revenue. Then we shall take such heads of expenditure as will balance that revenue. I know that our estimate may prove to be wrong; it will be time enough for the Federal Government to decide how it would adjust the difference. If there is a surplus, there should be no difficulty; if a deficit, naturally there would be some difficulty, but not one of us expects that the Federal Government will, when it is launched out on the stormy ocean of responsibility, meet no difficulty whatsoever.

I see that there is a kind of fear regarding decisions by the Federal Government, seeing that, in the Federal Government, up to now, we have pictured to ourselves a majority of those on the British Indian side; so that the fate of the States might be in the hands of that majority. If there is any such fear, we need not have any reservation whatsoever, or we might have some such reservation as I can just now think of, namely, that, unless there is an agreement between a two-thirds majority of the Princes on the one side and a similar majority on the other, there will be no decision taken binding on both sides. I take that by way of illustration as it comes into my mind whilst I am speaking. I

simply say that difficulties of this kind need not baffle us, and I feel that we ought to get rid of this incubus of expert opinion at every point. We are, after all, a poor country, and we are not going to get the assistance of experts at every turn. I think that, in India, we have intelligence enough to understand roughly what we want without having the guidance of experts; and, in my humble experience of things of the world, I have seen that, when you go to experts, sometimes you founder, because one expert says one thing, another expert says another. And when you come to matters of finance, which are ordinarily too deep for humble folk, these folk do not know which expert's opinion to take; so that they cast lots and trust to the future, saying that they are not going to be buffeted about by these experts. You find the same thing in law, with all deference to the Lord Chancellor.

H.H. THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER: You are a distinguished lawyer yourself.

MR. GANDHI: That is why I speak from bitter experience. The same is true of medicine. Heaven help us from medical men! Let us get rid of these difficulties that experts cast for us. After all, if we make any mistake, we ourselves will be the sufferers. But if we tread upon this ground with fear lurking in our breast, we shall not be able to evolve a scheme consistent with the dignity of the great and ancient country that we are. I have therefore simply explained my position as a very simple man before this Committee, so that, when we have these informal conversations, we may approach the question with fresh minds and not with minds full of dread.

May I, as I conclude, respectfully suggest to the Princes that they have come here with their experts also. They have brought their best men here. I will trust myself to those experts, and use my common sense judgment also if they dare to mislead me. But I shall be entirely satisfied, and in a few hours come to a definite conclusion as to what I want and what I do not want. Hence I remain absolutely convinced that we should either send this thing to Lord Peel's Subcommittee, putting the burden on them to come with a definite conclusion, or, instead of worrying that Subcommittee, some of us should sit together and produce a very humble agreed scheme with which we can start the financial part of the Federation.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 220-1

125. SPEECH AT TEMPERANCE WORKERS' MEETING[1]

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

The Speaker . . . lost no time in plunging in thoroughly businesslike fashion into his subject. The first half of the hour at his disposal he devoted to what proved to be a clear, concise and convincing statement of the position in India with regard to the traffic in drink and drugs. The rest of the time, by his own request, was devoted to answering questions which, he said, was "the best way to establish contact with his hearers". And of questions there were not a few—regular fusillade, in fact—all of which were clearly and courteously replied to.

Drink, we learned, was not the fashion in India as it is with us, in U.S.A. and on the Continent. In fact, it is 'taboo' in good society there. India seeks to rid herself of the traffic in it, the revenue from which, alas! goes to the Provincial Governments and is a main source of support for education. Indians, despairing of any help from the Government, had sought in recent years to reduce the evils resulting from the trade in intoxicants by peaceful picketing of the liquor shops, a work (involving much self-sacrificing effort on their part) heroically undertaken by Indian women, some of them of high degree. And Lord Irwin, with whom he had discussed the subject at length, had admitted the right of Indians to adopt that course of action in pursuing their campaign against "these two sinful traffics". as Gandhi with emphasis called them.

Such were some of the things we learned from the lips of this strange, ascetic-looking leader of men who only twice showed any emotion or fire in his narrative; once when an interrogator suggested that if the Indians were really earnest in desiring to end the traffic, it would surely not be difficult for their representatives on the Legislative Councils to suggest alternative methods of revenue-raising (e.g., by a light tax on salt or other article in general use). This suggestion Gandhi promptly and scornfully rejected. He would be no party, he said, to laying any greater burden on the people than they were already bearing. Reduction of the unnecessary expenditure on the standing army in India and of the excessive cost of the Indian Civil Service were his alternative methods. An inquiry respecting the payment of compensation to dispossessed licence-holders provoked amazement on his part that anyone should

[1] The meeting, which took place in the Central Hall, Westminster, was called by the Temperance Council of Christian Churches.

think of compensating them. It was the victims of the traffic, not those who conducted it, who, in his view, should be compensated.

British Weekly, 22-10-1931

126. CABLE TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

[After *October 16, 1931*]

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
ALLAHABAD

YOUR CABLE. YOU SHOULD UNHESITATINGLY TAKE NECESSARY STEPS MEET EVERY SITUATION. EXPECT NOTHING HERE.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 18224

[1] This was in answer to a cable dated October 16 from the addressee, which read: "Agrarian situation becoming critical. Coercive processes attachments forcible collection rent continued right through without interval. Many ejected tenants proceeded against for criminal trespass many for fear permanently losing land sold cattle belongings borrowed money paid full demand plus extras. Fresh demand now made for current season inadequate remissions threat that if full payment not made within month remission might be cancelled also no objection considered on behalf tenants till full payment made. Condition kisans deplorable thoroughly exhausted after past six months continuous harassment forcible measures. Apparently process likely be repeated this season also. Allahabad District Congress Committee resolved under circumstances ask permission start satyagraha if necessity arises by advising withholding payment rent application for permission made to Vallabhbhai and Provincial Committee. Representative District Kisan Conference being held next week to decide question. Decision likely have far-reaching consequences but question payment or withholding payment must be decided soon vital urgent problem for kisan no delay" (S.N. 18223).

127. LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

KINGSLEY HALL,
BOW,
October 17, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter[1] came as if in response to my prayer. I was about to write to you to send me an appointment when your welcome letter came. I shall be with you at 10 a.m. on Wednesday if the hour is not too early. So far as I can see, my work at the R.T.C. is nearly finished. But I cannot take any serious step without conferring with you. Of all this when we meet.

Pray excuse the left hand writing.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9439

128. SPEECH AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

NOTTINGHAM,
October 17, 1931

Gandhi said the Indian Congress demanded complete independence in the fullest sense of that term. India sought for power to control the defence forces, external affairs and finance.

I have used the term demand. As a matter of fact, no nation has ever secured independence by demanding it. Independence has to be earned by sacrifice and self-suffering. So far as history teaches, nations have come to freedom through rivers of

[1] It read: "I am coming to London the Monday next for two or three days—and I wondered if you had half an hour or an hour free on Wednesday morning 21. You might have cared to have another talk at Eaton Square. I know you will be very busy and may well be engaged in important Committee work. But I thought I would let you know my own movement and plans—in case you thought a talk would be helpful.

I have nothing particular to say that I am afraid I have not said before —and shall well understand if you feel reluctance to add to what must already be an overburdened engagement book!" (S.N. 18100)

blood. They have beaten back the intruder, oppressor or exploiter, but in the process they have suffered a big share of the beating.

We are fighting by truthful and non-violent means for freedom, the birthright of every nation. I am tired of people inflicting violence on others. Justice does not come that way. Civil disobedience has limitations, for millions cannot indulge in it. Our constructive activities consist of removing the curses of alcohol, drugs and untouchability. Don't think we are all at sixes and sevens because we have not yet arrived at agreement.

Birmingham Post, 19-10-1931

129. INTERVIEW TO EVELYN WRENCH[1]

LONDON,
[On or after *October 17, 1931*][2]

WRENCH: I am very glad to have this opportunity of having a talk with you, Mr. Gandhi, for the benefit of the readers of *The Spectator*.

GANDHIJI: One of the things I wanted to do while in England was to talk to the Editor of *The Spectator*, because we in India appreciate very much the part *The Spectator* has played in enlightening the people of Great Britain on Indian problems. I know that you may not necessarily agree with all the views I hold, but I recognize that you have repeatedly stated in the columns of *The Spectator* that the only satisfactory basis for the future relations of Great Britain and India is one of friendship, absolute equality and a recognition of the fact that the people of India must be the final arbiters of their destiny.

Q. Let's see; when were you last in England, Mr. Gandhi? It was some time before the War, wasn't it?

A. Yes, I visited England in 1909 and I was here again just two days after the outbreak of War[3]. On that occasion I assisted in the organization of a Red Cross unit, but unfortunately I fell ill and a severe attack of pleurisy prevented my doing what I

[1] Editor of *The Spectator*. The account has been extracted from Wrench's report "An Evening with Mr. Gandhi". The interview took place at Wrench's residence between 8 and 11 p.m.

[2] The source does not mention the date of the interview, but merely says it took place "last week".

[3] The first World War, in August 1914.

wanted to do before I returned to India at the end of November that year.[1]

Q. What is your chief impression as regards the British understanding of the Indian problem today? Do you find that public opinion has changed much?

A. Yes, I find a vast change in the attitude of the man in the street, and I have made a special point of talking with all sections of the British people. I am very happy in London and I have received wonderful signs of affection from your ordinary folk. In the East End I have been greatly touched by the friendliness displayed. People come out of their houses and shake hands with me and wish me well. I was much gratified by the reception I received in Lancashire, where the people seemed to me to understand my position; and despite the fact that my policy in India was reported to have affected Lancashire so grievously, no grudge was borne me and I found genuine friendship both from operatives and employers alike.

Q. What about the so-called upper and official classes? Do you think their opinion has changed and are they ready to give India what it wants?

A. I fear they still do not understand the position and are not ready to give the freedom that we claim as our right. They think that India is not ready today to control her own affairs, and I fear not many of them would be prepared to admit our right to the same freedom that Great Britain possesses, that is, the right to control our armed forces, our finances and our external affairs.

Q. As you know, Mr. Gandhi, *The Spectator* has always been a great believer in what is called Dominion Status. We think it has achieved the apparently impossible task of reconciling two apparent opposites, co-operation and independence. Would India be satisfied, do you think, with the same status that South Africa has as a Dominion within the British Commonwealth?

A. I regard the status of India as unique. After all, we represent a fifth of the human race. I do not think, therefore, that a political status which might suit other Dominions of the British Commonwealth would necessarily suit us. You must remember that India has been a subject nation for a very long time. If Great Britain approaches the question of the future relations between our peoples in a spirit of friendship with no reservations, she will

[1] Gandhiji sailed for home on December 19, 1914 and reached Bombay actually on January 9, 1915.

not find India behindhand in coming to meet her proffered hand. We would be quite ready, once our right to independence has been recognized, to enter into an alliance or partnership on equal terms which would place the relations of Great Britain and India on a satisfactory basis.

Q. Once Great Britain has stated finally and once for all that the peoples of India have the same right to control their own destiny that we have, do you think that India would still want to employ, on terms within India's means, British officials, British soldiers, British technicians, and to draw upon our experience in building up the Indian State of the future?

A. Yes, most certainly. Once Great Britain recognizes what we consider our just claims, I certainly would not wish to remove all the British officials in India.

I want to avail myself of all the experience you have gained. I believe that we could make mutually satisfactory arrangements once there is no dictation on your side.

Q. Is it true, as some of my more extreme nationalist friends have said, that India when she wants European advisers would rather turn to Continental Europeans such as Germans, French, Swedes, Dutch, in place of British?

A. No, I do not think this is true in general. We would certainly need advice and guidance from Europe in several things. If we could get these from Great Britain on terms that we can afford, we would welcome them. The only thing that would make us turn away from Great Britain would be if Great Britain refuses to grant what we consider our just demand.

If you will play the game with us and recognize our right to control our own defence, we should confer with your experts and ascertain what is considered the minimum number of British troops necessary for our needs. I would regard the British Commander-in-Chief in India as my technical adviser on military matters, but the British Army in India would, of course, have to be under the Indian National Government.

Q. What about the statement that it would be undignifi subjects to place themselves in the position of mercenaries tc Government?

A. I have heard the argument, but I cannot ap Behind the objection is the lurking belief that partn be partnership in name only and that in reality we are a subject nation. Or else, how can British soldiers serv ner nation be considered mercenaries? But if Brit will not serve the National Government, we must do wit

Q. In terms of self-interest, therefore, from the British standpoint, you think that a friendly India in close alliance and partnership with Great Britain would be an asset to us.

A. You should be the best judges. In my opinion, the solution of the Indian problem in a manner satisfactory to Indian aspirations would largely help Great Britain to solve her own economic question. It would be good for Great Britain, India, and the world. If Great Britain enters into a free-will partnership with India, that is to say, a partnership of equals, she will have a friendly nation to trade with and all the boycotting of British trade would naturally cease, apart, of course, from cloth. I fear Lancashire cannot get much help as we are determined to make our own cloth, but there are many other goods required which we shall have to import from abroad. For instance, I think India imports eighteen crores worth of sugar and seven crores worth of hardware, and so on.

We shall certainly not be able to manufacture all our own requirements for a long time to come.

Q. Then, Mr. Gandhi, I understand you to mean that you want India's right to control her own destiny recognized now once for all. If this were done, you think that the whole atmosphere would change and that Great Britain would then find the India that you represent only too ready to work out the details of co-operation? Rather than that the Round Table Conference should fail, you think that the principle of India's complete control of her destiny should be acknowledged and that such problems as the communal question should be left over to arbitration?

A. Yes, that is so. I think that once the British Government proclaimed to the world that India had as much right to freedom as Great Britain, we should be quite ready to accept the principle of arbitration on the difficult communal question. I do not think, however, that all the time which has been spent at the Round Table will be found to have been wasted. Believe me, Congress is not obstructive.

Sir Geoffrey Corbett's scheme has emerged from it. Sir Hubert Carr's scheme, which practically gives to the Moslems what they want in the Lower Chamber and to the Sikhs what they want in the Upper Chamber, also deserves very careful consideration. But, as I have said, I think much the best method would perhaps be to leave the question of the adjustment of seats and separate or joint electorates to an impartial judicial tribunal which would only be called into being in the case of non-settlement.

Q. What about the untouchables? I know it is thought in some quarters that they ought to have separate electorates and that you are not qualified to speak for them.

A. I am glad you have dealt with this subject. I do not hesitate to say that, if the untouchables in all parts of India would record their votes, I should be their representative. Dr. Ambedkar is undoubtedly clever and enthusiastic. He has every reason to be bitter. I have spent the best part of my life in championing their cause, I have mixed with them east, west, north and south in India, I have many of them in my own Ashram, I adopted an untouchable girl. Many Congressmen think as I do and realize how serious is the untouchable problem.

In the interests of the untouchables themselves I think it would be fatal for them to have a special electorate, or to have reservation of seats. If this were attempted, it would create opposition to them. I think their interests would be best safeguarded by their coming "through the open door", to let them have the same voting rights as the ordinary Hindu. They will find that the leaders of Indian opinion are determined to improve their social status and give them the right to enter into temples and are ready to remove those other terrible disabilities under which they have suffered in the past.

Q. Readers of Miss Mayo's book[1] have never been able to understand the Indian treatment of animals. They know that the Hindu thinks it is wrong to take life, but they cannot understand a system which allows wretched animals in a diseased condition to be left to die on the roadside and not put out of their misery. What have you got to say on that subject?

A. You have dealt with one of the problems which reformers in India hope to rectify in time. In my Ashram, we had a dying calf.[2] He had stinking sores and was lame. I put an end to his earthly existence by painless injections. I was bitterly attacked by some of my fellow-countrymen, who in my view have yet to learn that ahimsa never meant that suffering which could be terminated should be permitted. I think that much of the animal suffering in India today is due to this travesty of what ahimsa meant.

Q. To move on to another subject. I would be interested to know something of your religious beliefs. Have you ever had religious doubts and when

[1] *Mother India*; for Gandhiji's comments on the book, *vide* Vol. XXXIV, pp. 539-47.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 310-5.

did you first firmly believe in God and since then have you ever been through dark nights of the soul?

A. When I was quite young I did go through a period of complete disbelief, I was an atheist in fact. This was when I was about fourteen. Since then, however, I have always believed in God.

Q. Do you then believe in the personal immortality of the soul?

A. Yes, I believe in the immortality of the soul. I would like to give you the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity and yet it is part of the whole, 'the one and the many'. In this ocean of life we are all little drops.

My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum total of this life is God.

Q. Did any book ever affect you supremely and was there any turning point in your life?

A. Yes, the book that affected me more than any other was *Unto This Last* by Ruskin. I was living in South Africa then. It was the reading of *Unto This Last* on a railway journey to Durban in 1904 when I was thirty-five, that made me decide to change my whole outward life.[1] There is no other word for it, Ruskin's words captivated me. I read the book in one go and lay awake all the following night and I there and then decided to change my whole plan of life. Tolstoy I had read much earlier. He affected the inner being.

Q. You were a fairly successful lawyer then, weren't you Mr. Gandhi? Did your conversion mean then that you came to the conclusion it was wrong to enjoy the good things of this life? What income were you making then?

A. As far as I recollect, I was making something like 3,000 a year by my legal practice. My "conversion", as you call it, decided for me that in future I would dedicate all my earnings to causes that I felt were for the benefit of my fellows, that in the future I would live simply and by physical labour, and imperfectly as I have tried to carry out that aim, I know that it is only by living thus that one achieves complete peace of mind.

Q. I have been very much struck with your wonderful vitality. Few men of sixty-two can be so full of energy. I have read in the papers some of the things about your diet. Would you tell me just what your daily bill of fare is?

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 239.

A. Certainly. I am sure that most people eat much too much. I have never felt better than I do on my present regimen and I have a horror of drugs and medicines. This is my daily bill of fare: For my breakfast at 8 o'clock I have sixteen ounces of goat's milk and four oranges, for my luncheon at 1 o'clock I again have sixteen ounces of milk, grapes, pears or other fruit. My evening meal is between 5 and 6 o'clock. I eat a teaspoonful of almond paste, twenty or thirty dates, several tomatoes and a lettuce or other salad. This avoids indigestion. As you will note, I eat no starch and no cereals.

Q. To sum up, Mr. Gandhi, if the Conference breaks down, do you think the people of India will be satisfied with partial Home Rule, with the possibility of a further conference in ten or twenty years when the British Parliament considers that India is in a position to control her own destiny?

A. I am sure you know what my answer will be. I have tried while I have been in England not to say anything provocative, but those of us who are giving our lives to India will never be satisfied with half-measures. If the people of India after this Conference become convinced that Great Britain is not genuine in her desire to give them immediate self-government, all the forces at their disposal will be used.

Q. What is your final word to the readers of *The Spectator*?

A. My final word to your readers is that they should use all the influence at their disposal to get their friends to see our point of view, that they should work for the great cause of a real partnership between our countries on a basis of equality. I think that a free association of our two nations or groups of nations, can be utilized for the solving of many world problems, not merely for the good of the greatest number, but for the good of all.

The Spectator, 24-10-1931

130. LETTER TO ALBERT EINSTEIN[1]

LONDON,
October 18, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to have your beautiful letter sent through Sundaram. It is a great consolation to me that the work I am doing finds favour in your sight. I do indeed wish that we could meet face to face and that too in India at my Ashram.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. EINSTEIN

From a photostat: C.W. 9500

131. INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM[2]

SELLY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

The scientist Bishop made out a strong case for science and machinery which he said must be made to free man from manual toil, so that he may have all his time or the bulk of it for intellectual work. Gandhiji reminded the Bishop that he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably on the strength of the old adage: 'Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do.' But the Bishop demurred. "Look here", said he, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits." Gandhiji laughing, said:

[1] This was in answer to Einstein's letter, dated September 27, which read: "You have shown by all that you have done that we can achieve the ideal even without resorting to violence. We can conquer those votaries of violence by the non-violent method. Your example will inspire and help humanity to put an end to a conflict based on violence with international help and co-operation guaranteeing peace to the world.

"With this expression of my devotion and admiration I hope to be able to meet you face to face."—*Statesman*, 22-5-1965

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account: "The Birmingham Visit". According to a report in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24-10-1931, the interview took place in the morning.

I know, but if all became Bishops, the Bishops would find their occupation gone.

Young India, 5-11-1931

132. MESSAGE TO INDIANS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM[1]

SELLY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

You handful of Indians in the British Isles are trustees for the good name of India. So beware![2]

Put your talents in the service of the country instead of converting them into £.s.d. If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to need all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. Instead of fomenting more trouble, patch up those quarrels and stop litigation. If you are an engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people, and yet full of health and fresh air. There is nothing that you have learnt which cannot be turned to account. Do what Kumarappa[3], also a Chartered Accountant like you, is doing. There is a dire need everywhere for accountants to audit the accounts of Congress and its adjunct associations. Come to India—I will give you enough work and also your hire—4 annas per day, which is surely much more than millions in India get.

India will have to go through the fiery ordeal before Englishmen can be made to say: 'We are sorry, we did not do what we should have done long before.' A strong nation would not succumb so easily as we might imagine. And as one wedded to non-violence I should not have England compelled to yield anything without a will. England must be convinced that it is good for her to yield and for India to win her freedom, before she actually surrenders power.

Q. To convince England do you not think you should stay here a little longer?

No, I cannot stay beyond my time. I would cease to have any influence here if I overstayed and the people would cease to

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's: "The Birmingham Visit"
[2] After this brief message, Gandhiji answered questions put to him.
[3] Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, economist

respond. The influence that I now exercise is only a temporary influence, not permanent. My place is in India, in the midst of my countrymen, who may be called upon to start another campaign of suffering. In fact, the English people seem to respond today because they know that I represent a suffering people, and when I am suffering with my own countrymen, I would be speaking to them from India as heart speaks to heart.

Young India, 5-11-1931

133. SPEECH AT BIRMINGHAM MEETING[1]

SELLY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

Whereas to other places I have gone as a matter of business, to deliver my message, I have come here as a matter of pilgrimage because this Settlement it was that spared and sent Mr. Horace Alexander to us at a time[2] when we were in need of a friend. . . . It was a time when news of satyagraha could not be transmitted from India, everything that was sent was censored, the principal men were all in jail. It was then that the friends came to the conclusion that a mission ought to be sent to India and Mr. Alexander was chosen for the purpose. Not only were you able to spare him but his wife, a cripple, spared him. Now you will understand why it is a pilgrimage for me to come here.

With regard to the work before me, I did not think I should take your time to describe it to you now. The vast majority of the people now know what the Indian National Congress claims for the nation. You know what means we have adopted, perhaps, for the first time in history, to achieve our independence. And you also know how far the nation during the last year was able to live up to its creed. I would like to emphasize upon you the fact that, if the work that is now being done at the Round Table Conference is to bear fruit, it will do so only if the pressure of intelligent public opinion is brought to bear upon it. I have

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account: "The Birmingham Visit". The meeting was held in the afternoon at Woodbrooke Settlement with Horace Alexander in the chair. According to a report in *Birmingham Post*, 19-10-1931, those present included the Mayor of Birmingham, W. W. Saunders, and the Lady Mayoress and the Bishop of Birmingham. The meeting lasted two hours.

[2] In 1930, after the failure of the Sapru-Jayakar mediatory efforts (*vide* Vol. XLIV).

often remarked that my true work in England lies outside the Conference, not in the Conference. In my few public speeches I have not hesitated to throw out a hint that no work was being done in the Conference, that it was marking time and that the precious time of those who had come from India and those who were representing British interests in the Conference was being wasted. That being my opinion, I cannot be too insistent that responsible leaders of public opinion in the British Isles should inform themselves of the true nature of the struggle that Indians are carrying on against heavy odds. For, unless you understand the true nature and the[1] inner meaning of this struggle, you will not be able to bring effective pressure to bear on those who are conducting the affairs of the State here.

I know enough of the composition of this meeting to know that you are all earnest seekers after truth and anxious to do the right, not only especially with regard to this, but any cause that deserves the assistance of human beings. And if you will approach this question from this standpoint, it is just likely that the deliberations of the Round Table Conference might prove fruitful.

One of the questions that were put to Gandhiji at the end of his speech was whether settlement was not made impossible by Indian representatives not agreeing among themselves on the communal question. Gandhiji, while emphatically repudiating the suggestion, said:

I know you have been taught to think like that. You cannot shake off the spell of that hypnotic suggestion. My case is that alien rulers have ruled India on the principle of "Divide and Rule". No alien Imperial rule could go on in India unless the rulers now coquetted with one and then with the other party. We will continue to be divided so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the wedge. But take out the wedge and the split parts will instantly come together and unite. Again, the attainment of unity has been rendered a task of Herculean difficulty by the composition of the Conference itself, as all the Delegates here are nominated, none of them is duly elected. If, for instance, the Nationalist Muslims had been asked to elect their representative, it would have been Dr. Ansari. Lastly, we should not forget that even if the present Delegates had been elected, they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility. We, on the other hand, are here on the sufferance of the British Prime Minister. We are

[1] The source has "its".

responsible to nobody, we have no constituency to appeal to. Again, we are reminded that unless we agree among ourselves on the communal issue no progress is possible. In the very nature of the things, therefore, each pulls it a different way and to exact the utmost he can. Again while the Delegates are called upon to present an agreed communal solution, they are not told what they would get if they agree and so the incentive that could have made agreement beforehand possible is killed at the very start, rendering agreement very nearly impossible. Let the Government declare that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians agreed or not and you will see that we shall then soon agree. The fact of the matter is that no one feels that he is going to get real live liberty. What is offered is simply a share in the power of the bureaucracy to exploit India and this sets up an apple of discord in our midst. Further, the Government having made constitution-making dependent upon the solution of the communal question, every party is tempted to pitch its demand as high as possible. If the Government at all meant business, it would unhesitatingly accept my suggestion, viz., to appoint a judicial tribunal to decide the communal question at issue. If this is done, there is every possibility of an agreed solution being reached without the intervention of the judicial tribunal.

In reply to a further question asking what would happen in India during the transition period if the British Government abdicated its function, Gandhiji said:

Alien rule is like foreign matter in an organic body. Remove the poison and the body will at once start recuperating. It is preposterous to suggest that the British Government would be abdicating its function if it withdraws from India. The only function that it is fulfilling today is of exploiting India. Let Britain cease to exploit India and India will immediately revive economically.

Q. Have the people of India themselves come to an agreement on fundamentals?

The Congress has come with an agreed scheme of communal settlement, but it is not accepted. Here at the Conference the Congress is only one of the many parties that are said to be represented here. The organic fact, however, is that it is the only representative body speaking for the vast masses in India. It is the one life, organic and independent organization that has been functioning for close upon fifty years. It is the only organization that has stood the test of untold suffering. It is the Congress which arrived at a Settlement with the Government, and say what you

will, it is the only organization that will one day replace the present Government. My claim is that the scheme that it produced through a representative committee of one Sikh, one Muslim and one Hindu member of its Cabinet would standthe test of any judicial tribunal so far as fairness and justness is concerned.

One member of the audience asked the question whether the Round Table Conference had broken down and whether India should wait for swaraj until another conference. Gandhiji replied:

I am not giving up all hope till I have severed all connection with the Round Table Conference. Apparently, therefore, I still entertain some hope though, I may say, I have little data to build on. But it is against my nature to violently break away from an organization with which I have been co-operating. I do not know whether, the next time when the solution comes, there will be another Round Table Conference or not, but this much I know that, if the Round Table Conference breaks down, a solution will not be reached before India has passed through a fiery ordeal much more severe than the one it passed through last year.

Q. You talk of the impoverishment of India as being the result of British exploitation, but is it not a fact that the real cause of the agriculturists' misery is the rapacity of the Bania and extravagance of expenditure on the occasion of marriages and funerals? Finally, you charge the British Government with extravagance. But what have you to say to the extravagance of the Indian Princes?

A. The Indian Bania is not a patch upon the English Bania and, if we were acting violently, the Indian Bania would deserve to be shot. But then, the British Bania would deserve to be shot a hundred times. The rate of interest charged by the Indian Bania is nothing compared to the loot carried on by the British Bania through the jugglery of currency and merciless exactions of Land Revenue. I do not know of another instance in history of such an organized exploitation of so unorganized and gentle a race. As for the profligacy of the Indian Princes, while I would have little hesitation, if I had the power, in dispossessing them of their insolent palaces, I would have infinitely less in depriving the British Government of New Delhi. The extravagance of the Princes was nothing compared to the heartless squandering of crores of rupees on New Delhi to satisfy the whim of a Viceroy in order to reproduce England in India, when masses of people were dying of hunger.

An amusing question was asked by a friend who quoted a letter from *The Manchester Guardian* in which the correspondent questioned Gandhiji's

authority to speak for the untouchables, as he belonged to the priestly class which had kept that community depressed so far, and asked whether Gandhiji himself was not a great hindrance in the way of a settlement.

I never knew that I was a Brahmin, but I do happen to be a Bania, which is certainly regarded as a term of painful reproach. But let me inform the audience that my community excommunicated me when I came to English shores 40 years ago and the work that I have been doing entitles me to be called a farmer, weaver and untouchable. I was wedded to the work for the extinction of untouchability long before I was wedded to my wife. There were two occasions in our joint life when there was a choice between working for the untouchables and remaining with my wife and I would have preferred the first. But thanks to my good wife, the crisis was averted. In my Ashram, which is my family, I have several untouchables and a sweet but naughty girl living as my own daughter. As to whether I am acting as a hindrance to a settlement, I confess, I am for the simple reason that I would not be satisfied with any compromise short of real complete independence for India.

Q. Sometimes we have found it difficult to reconcile the special form of united protest that you have evolved, with an appeal to reason. What is it that makes you sometimes feel that appeal to reason should be put aside in favour of more drastic action?

A. Up to the year 1906 I simply relied on appeal to reason. I was a very industrious reformer. I was a good draftsman, as I always had a close grip of facts which in its turn was the necessary result of my meticulous regard for truth. But I found that reason failed to produce an impression when the critical moment arrived in South Africa. My people were excited—even a worm will and does sometimes turn—and there was talk of wreaking vengeance. I had then to choose between allying myself to violence or finding out some other method of meeting the crisis and stopping the rot, and it came to me that we should refuse to obey legislation that was degrading and let them put us in jail if they liked. Thus came into being the moral equivalent of war. I was then a loyalist, because I implicitly believed that the sum total of the activities of the British Empire was good for India and for 'humanity'. Arriving in England soon after the outbreak of the War, I plunged into it and later, when I was forced to go to India as a result of the pleurisy that I had developed, I led a recruiting campaign at the risk of my life, and to the horror of some of my friends. The disillusionment came in 1919 after the passage

of the Black Rowlatt Act and the refusal of the Government to give the simple elementary redress of proved wrongs[1] that we had asked for. And so, in 1920, I became a rebel. Since then the conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason. Nobody has probably drawn up more petitions or espoused more forlorn causes than I, and I have come to this fundamental conclusion that, if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

Young India, 5-11-1931

134. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[2]

[After *October 18, 1931*][3]

Q. Don't you think there is fear of the different communities violently quarrelling among themselves when the British withdraw from India?

A. I have compared the British rule to a wedge and no sooner the wedge is removed than the divided parts will unite. But even if we continue to fight, I should think it a godsend. A man who broods on evil is as bad as a man who does evil, if he is no worse, and so, if we are prevented from running at one another's throats simply because of the superimposed force of alien rule, the sooner that force is removed the better. We should fight harder for a time, but we should unite better ultimately.

Q. Are you quite sure that, if you had the elected representatives of the people on the Conference, you would be united at once?

[1] The Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs, *vide* Vol. XVI.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article: "The Fundamentals". He had taken down all that Gandhiji said "at one meeting or another in London or other places" and put it "in the form of answers to questions, in his own language".

[3] Mahadev Desai said, this was to be read along with his report of the Birmingham meeting, which was held on October 18, 1931.

A. I am quite sure. We should then have gone by the decision of the majority. It is not so much the fault of men as the absence of responsibility under which they labour. Even these very people, if elected, would act differently.

Q. Would you not use salt for taxing and balancing the budget?[1] Would you not agree to the Federation having limitless powers to tax some articles including salt?[2]

A. The Federation should have no right to tax salt. Not unless I wanted to commit the sin of taxing the poor would I think of balancing the budget by taxing salt. If you want to balance the budget, why not cut down the military expenditure? It would be a crime against humanity to add to the already heavy burden of the poor Indian tax-payer. You may as well tax air and water and expect India to live.

Young India, 5-11-1931

135. LETTER TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 19, 1931

DEAR NAWAB SAHEB,

At the meeting that is to take place at Claridge's tonight, I suggest that the following proposals be discussed.

Only certain heads of revenue such as:

a. Customs, subject to existing rights of the States.
b. Similarly salt.
c. Export Opium.
d. Excises on articles (today) levied in addition to Custom duties.
e. The receipts from federal commercial undertakings, e.g., Railways, Posts and Telegraphs.
f. Profits from Federal Currency.
g. Existing revenue derived direct from the Provinces, e.g., Income Tax, and from the States through the territories ceded by them and in other ways, be accepted as common sources of Federal revenue against expenditure to the extent of the revenue that might accrue through such

[1] This was asked at the Birmingham meeting.
[2] This was asked by Lord Sankey.

heads. This method secures the States against any risk of undertaking liabilities beyond the actual income.

In the event of it being found necessary to tap other sources of revenue, the Constitution may provide that no such revenue shall be Federal, unless a two-thirds or larger majority of the representatives of the States in the Federal Legislature agree.

H. H. THE NAWAB SAHEB OF BHOPAL
CHANCELLOR OF THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES

From a photostat: S.N. 18142

136. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*[1]

LONDON,
October 20, 1931

MR. GANDHI: If it is to be said that they are decided, I think I ought to say a word.

CHAIRMAN: Do you think there ought to be a limit?

MR. GANDHI: Not only that, but personally I should resist a tax on Salt altogether, and not merely limit it. I do not think I can say off-hand, moreover, that there should be no limit so far as Customs are concerned. There are many things on which I would say, 'No, I will not go beyond this.' Similarly with Opium.

CHAIRMAN: What do you say with regard to Opium?

MR. GANDHI: Opium I would have limitless.

CHAIRMAN: That is good. We are all agreed on Opium anyhow. Now, Mr. Gandhi, with regard to Customs, would you say there should be some limit there?

MR. GANDHI: I think so.

CHAIRMAN: What limit is in your mind?

MR. GANDHI: I would not take Customs in general; my judgment would vary, and I would not allow an expert to tell me what I should do, because it would be a matter of policy.

[1] The Chairman put forward for the Committee's consideration the question whether, for the purpose of creating a balanced budget, the Federation should have power to impose certain taxes. As to this there was general agreement. Sir Akbar Hydari said, it had already been agreed that Customs, Salt and Opium should be included among the taxes to be federalized. The question then was whether there should be a limitation on levying these taxes. A number of speakers said there should not be and the Chairman asked whether the matter should be taken as decided.

CHAIRMAN: That means giving the Federal Authority no limit, so that you agree with regard to Customs. We are all agreed on Opium, and we agree on Customs, because you say, "I do not want any expert to tell me what I am to do", nor does the Federal Government. Now, with regard to Salt, I know that is rather a difficult question, but we want to get to the heart of the matter now. What do you think should be the position of the Federal Government so far as a tax on Salt is concerned? Do you think there ought to be no tax at all?

MR. GANDHI: Not only no tax, but the tax which is today levied on Salt should go.

LORD PEEL: Mr. Gandhi is expressing his individual opinion; but does he suggest that, in the Statute itself, the right to tax Salt by the Federal Government should be expressly excluded?

MR. GANDHI: I do.

CHAIRMAN: Very well; we will make a note that Mr. Gandhi objects to any tax on Salt.

LORD PEEL: It is more than that; it is more than a personal objection. He thinks Salt ought to be excluded.

CHAIRMAN: He thinks Salt ought to be excluded, yes. Now, Mr. Gandhi, would you help us with regard to this. First of all, can anybody say what the present tax on Salt brings in.

MR. GANDHI: Six crores.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: 6.7 crores, less 1.23.

MR. GANDHI: I will give in to anybody who says between 6 and 7 crores.

CHAIRMAN: Very well, we will say 7.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: The Government of India figure would make it about 5.50.

CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Gandhi, perhaps you will help us in this way. Suppose we were to say, "Well, Mr. Gandhi is quite right; there ought not to be this tax", I would like to ask you where are we to get this five millions—taking it at five millions—from. Could you just help us with regard to that? What would you do?

MR. GANDHI: My answer is that there should be a reduction to the extent of 6 crores from the Military expenditure.

CHAIRMAN: The way you want to do things is to reduce expenditure?

MR. GANDHI: I do.

CHAIRMAN: Now, Sir Akbar, what other taxes do you think ought to be included?

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: There are two or three sources which have been indicated in the report of the Subcommittee, and one or two were indicated in His Highness of Bhopal's speech; but before I can finally commit myself to them, I should like first of all to have before me the finally examined figures—I will not use the word 'expert', because it seems to be in a way unpalatable to certain people, and it seems to give rise to confusion as to whether these are experts in the role of arbitrators, or of explorers or of confirmers—therefore, I say, I should like to have before me the figures, from which I could see how much is required, or will be required, ordinarily to balance the budget, and what these sources are likely to produce. . . .

MR. GANDHI: Lord Peel, will you oblige us by undertaking to frame a concrete formula? If you do not, then it might be nobody's business, and we shall get nowhere; but if you would guide us by giving us a concrete formula which we might discuss, I would gladly welcome your suggestion.

LORD PEEL: I think I can say that, whether through the Chairman or through some other member of the Government, the Government would be prepared to put forward a proposal for the consideration of the Committee.

MR. JINNAH: As I understand it, your proposal is only as to the terms of reference?

LORD PEEL: I do not want to limit it exactly to the terms of reference, but as to what should be the actual operation and the scope of the work of this Committee. I put it in more general language. I do not want to limit it too closely.

MR. JINNAH: It assumes that it must be referred to a Committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 224-8

137. SPEECH AT CHATHAM HOUSE MEETING[1]

LONDON,
October 20, 1931

You were good enough to say that I have spared from my busy time a few moments to address a gathering under the auspices of this Institute. I must confess that I seize every opportunity I can of coming into touch with British public opinion and putting before them the purpose of my mission. I have therefore come

[1] Held under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the meeting was attended by influential Englishmen and Englishwomen drawn from all parts of England. Lord Lothian presided.

before you quite selfishly, and I hope that the words I speak to you this evening will find a lodgment in your hearts. At the end of what I have to say I should like you to cross-examine me and ask me any questions you may like to put. I have found by experience that that is the only way of removing the mists of misunderstanding. I have noticed that the greatest stumbling-block in my way is the hopeless ignorance of the true facts of the situation, through no fault of yours; you belong to one of the busiest nations in the world, you have your own problems, and at the present moment this great island of yours is going through a crisis such as you have never had to face within living memory. My whole heart goes out to you in your troubles, and I hope that you will soon be able, with your marvellous energy, to cut a way out of them. No wonder, however, that, preoccupied as you are, you find no time to study the problems that affect a distant land like India. It is therefore a matter of keen pleasure to me that so many of you have found time to come here and listen to what I may have to say. I only feel grieved that many of you who are listening to my voice are unable to find accommodation in this room. With these preliminary words, I plunge into my subject.

In order to give you a description of the future of India as I conceive it, I shall tell you in as few words as possible what India is at present. India is a sub-continent by itself, nineteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide, with a population of roughly 350 millions. Of these about 210 millions are Hindus, 70 millions are Mussalmans, 3 millions are Sikhs; there is also a fairly large Indian Christian population, and a very small European or, more correctly speaking, English population. Numerically it is insignificant, but, as you know, it enjoys a position of privilege and influence unsurpassed, belonging as it does to the ruling race.

We have within this population our own Hindu-Muslim-Sikh problem, or, as it is called, the problem of minorities. I will not go into the problem as it affects other minorities, nor will I take up your time by airing my views with regard to these minorities, but one minority I may not omit, the unhappy untouchables, a word which is a standing reproach to the Hindus of India who form the majority of the population. Untouchability is a curse upon Hinduism, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if untouchability is not rooted out of Hinduism, Hinduism must perish. The time has come when any system, no matter how hoary and ancient it may be, must stand the light of day, must be able to stand fierce criticism, and if Hinduism harbours untouchability, it has no place on this earth.

I am glad to tell you that Congress has made the removal of untouchability an integral part of its programme, and under the inspiration of Congress there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of young Hindu reformers who have dedicated their lives to the removal of this blot upon Hinduism and upon India. These young men and women are reaching a hand to these untouchables in a variety of ways. We are digging wells for them, opening schools for them, building new temples for them and opening up old temples for them. We are giving to twenty-five thousand untouchable women, if not more, work in their own homes. We have introduced them to spinning-wheels. We have found for several thousand untouchables their old occupation of rough weaving, which had died out owing to the competition of modern manufactured cloth. This meant that they had taken either to scavenging or to some other occupation, because of their inability to earn their livelihood from this noble hereditary occupation of weaving. Thanks to God and to the efforts of these young reformers, several thousand untouchables have thus recovered their old occupation of rough weaving. There are several families who were heavily indebted and who now are not only free from debts but have laid by a decent sum. One family I can recollect has laid by what is in India a very respectable sum for a poor family—two thousand rupees. This family is in demand all over India as teachers, because both husband and wife are accomplished weavers and conscientious and skilled workers. You can imagine how much self-respect they must have gained, owing to their being wanted as teachers and not as scavengers and treated almost as a plague.

That is a very important minority, important in the sense that it deserves all the sympathy and all the aid that can be given to it. I have not a shadow of doubt that this untouchability is going very fast, and if, through God's grace, India comes to her own as a result of the deliberations of the Round Table Conference or otherwise, you will find that untouchability has gone for ever.

But I have not yet finished my description of India as it is. What is this 350 million population doing? More than eighty-five per cent of this population is engaged in agriculture and is living in seven hundred thousand villages, dotted over the vast surface that I have described. There are some villages in India which have a population of not more than a hundred souls; there are, again, villages which have a population of as many as five thousand. Now Indian agriculture depends very largely—it has to—upon its precarious rainfall. In parts of that subcontinent, like

Cherapunji, you have a deluge of rain, as much as 600 inches. In other parts, like Sind and Central India, for example, you have hardly 5 inches. And then, often, it is not equally distributed.

Agricultural holdings are anything between one acre, or three-quarters of an acre, and two and a half acres. I think, taking province by province, in no province are the holdings, on the average, more than two and a half or three acres per head. I am open to correction, but I think I am not far out, and there are thousands upon thousands who have less than one acre, and again tens of thousands who are absolutely landless, and who are therefore living in India as serfs, one might almost say as slaves. It cannot be called a state of legal slavery, but it is really a state bordering on slavery. This population, because all the rainfall is concentrated within two, three, four or five months at the outside, lives without any continuous occupation for nearly six months of the year. In some places where there are double crops, the absence of occupation extends over a period of four months, but, roughly speaking, you may say that these agriculturists of India are without any constant occupation for half the year.

That being so, there is deep and ever-deepening poverty among the masses. The average income of the people for the whole of India is two pence per day. If the average income of these 350 million people is two pence a day—and in calculating this average the wealth of a few millionaires is included—you will have no difficulty in understanding that there are tens of thousands of people who do not even earn two pence per day. The result is that nearly one-tenth of the population is living in a condition of semi-starvation. They have no more than one meal per day, consisting of stale chapati and a pinch of dirty salt. There is no such thing as bread. They do not know from year's end to year's end what milk is, or even skimmed milk; they do not know what butter is; they do not know what oil is; they never get green vegetables. That is the condition of the vast mass of sunken humanity in India.

I have now to tell you what should be, and, if the Congress had its way, would be the future state of India. I have not filled in the picture with the cities because the cities do not make India; it is the villages which make India. Nor have I put in the Princes; the Princes also have a portion of these villages, and the life of the villagers in British India. If there is any difference, and there is some, it is a difference of degree and in no sense a difference of kind. Princes will come and Princes will go, empires will come and empires will go, but this India living in her villages will

remain just as it is. Sir Henry Maine has left a monograph, *The Village Communities of India,* in which you will find the author saying that all these villages were at one time, and are to a certain extent now, self-contained "little republics". They have their own culture, mode of life, and method of protecting themselves, their own village schoolmaster, their own priest, carpenter, barber, in fact everything that a village could want. There is certainly today no kind of government to be seen in the villages, but whatever their life is, these villages are self-contained, and if you went there, you would find that there is a kind of agreement under which they are built. From these villages has perhaps arisen what you call the iron rule of caste. Caste has been a blight on India, but it has also acted as a sort of protecting shield for these masses. But I must not take you into the intricacies of this caste system.

What I am trying to give you is as faithful a picture as possible of India as it is at present. I must also not detain you with the impress that British rule has left on India, what that rule is today and what it accounts for. I have dwelt upon that at other meetings and you have some of the literature; but you have no literature on the future of India. I could not possibly have given you a picture of the future unless I had given you this background. If I tell you more about this peasantry of India, you will not now be surprised. The Congress has made it an article of faith that the test of its work and its progress shall be the measure of its becoming a predominantly peasant organization, and we have set for ourselves this rule, that we shall not consider any interest in India which is in conflict with the fundamental well-being of this eighty per cent of the population.

Then, what should the government of that population be? The foremost thing that the future State of India would look after would be the economic welfare of these masses. You will therefore have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that, then, this Government is going to find some occupation for these idle six months of the year for the peasant. That should really be the primary concern of any person who undertakes this gigantic task. By a process of elimination we have come to the conclusion that for this homogeneous population you must have one predominant occupation. You must have an easy occupation; you must have tools for that occupation that can easily be made in the villages, and the product of the village industry must be capable of being consumed by the villagers. If you can give some occupation which will answer all these tests, you will have a process of production and distribution, self-contained and without any other intermediary

having to be resorted to. Such an occupation was the ancient occupation of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. I will not now take you through the history of how it was destroyed. But you find that, due to the Congress, the Spinners' Association is penetrating as quickly as it can the thousands of villages of India. We have in this manner penetrated two thousand villages. This occupation has nearly doubled the income of the villagers. You will understand what two pence added to two pence means to a poor man; it means, I suggest, a fortune. You will then take all the occupations necessary in connection with cotton, from hand-spinning and hand-weaving to printing, dyeing and washing. When you take into consideration all these occupations, it does govern the income of the people, and when we have done that, we have given these people a little bit of hope and courage and have put a little lustre into their eyes. If you walked with me in the villages of Orissa, you would see walking death throughout the length and breadth of that thrice-afflicted land. You see specimens of humanity, not voluntarily but compulsorily, mere skin and bone without any flesh on their limbs. If we give them this occupation, we put into them new life and new hope.

But the activity of the new State will not stop there. These people are living in utter ignorance of sanitation and we have to look after the hygienic conditions. So we try to introduce the hygienic methods of Dr. Poor, who has written a volume on village hygiene. Briefly speaking, it consists of turning human excreta into manure. The Chinese people are the greatest people of the earth in the knowledge of the use of these human excreta, and Dr. Poor says the Chinese were his teachers in discovering this economic treatment. We are trying to do two things—to add to the wealth of the nation and to the health of the nation—and if we teach the people this method of treating human excreta, the result will be that we shall rid ourselves somewhat of the plague of flies, and sterilize to some extent the poisonous mosquito—not fully, I know, but it is in the right direction.

Then we must give them some medical assistance in this malaria-ridden country. India suffers from many diseases, but malaria is essentially a disease induced by want. It is not to be driven away by simply giving the villagers packets of quinine. Quinine is essential, but it is useless unless you can give them some milk or some fruit, as their digestive apparatus is not capable of taking anything else. So we are trying to give them some simple medical aid where we can. I am not trying to give you an idea that we have already done this, but I am talking of the future State, not as a

visionary but as a practical man. We have tried this on a small scale, and if I can multiply this activity through the aid of the future State, you will understand what India can be without a vast outlay. We give this medical aid, not through the very expensive methods that the Western doctors teach us, but we revive our own ancient treatment. Every village once had its own medical man. You may say he was a quack and that he was extremely ignorant of the elementary principles which govern this little body of ours; all which is very true. But all the same he was a man who could give them some comfort, and, the occupation being hereditary, where he was not a dishonest man, he really served an efficient purpose. If you give him this elementary knowledge of hygiene, which is preventive medicine, and teach him this simple way of curing the people of malaria, you have gone a very long way.

What I am telling you today is a thing that was approved by the Surgeon-General of the Bombay Presidency. When he came to see me whilst I was lying in the Sassoon Hospital,[1] he was discussing it with me, and I told him, "Your English methods are too expensive for this poor country, and if you want to treat a village through your method, it would take two or three centuries." He agreed and said, "What would you do?" So I told him my plan.

That does not finish the picture. We have the education of this future State. I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished. The village schools were not good enough for the British administrator, so he came out with his programme. Every school must have so much paraphernalia, building, and so forth. Well, there were no such schools at all. There are statistics left by a British administrator which show that, in places where they have carried out a survey, ancient schools have gone by the board, because there was no recognition for these schools, and the schools established after the European pattern were too expensive for the people, and therefore they could not possibly overtake the thing. I defy anybody to fulfil a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of

[1] In January 1924, when Gandhiji underwent an operation for appendicitis; *vide* Vol. XXIII.

a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our State would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls.

Then, although British people have spent millions in completing some irrigation works, we claim that their progress in that work has not been as quick as it might have been. The military railways, which have done some good, no doubt, in transporting goods from one place to another, have done nothing of what irrigation would have done. These irrigation schemes were and are really too expensive to cover the whole of India. We have, however, our own ancient method of irrigation: deep-well irrigation in some parts, in other parts well irrigation that is not deep well. I must confess my ignorance of this, but an Englishman, who is trying experiments in intensive agriculture, and who is now here, was telling me that he had been working in the poet Tagore's village. It was Mr. Elmhurst who really gave life to that village experiment, and owing to it they were opening canal irrigation works which did not require any skill other than that produced in the villages. He tells me they have compelled the Government to recognize the superiority of this method. I am simply giving you the evidence that this man gave to me about this canal irrigation, but I do know that there are ancient methods of irrigation compatible with the capacity of the people.

I have told you what we would do constructively, but we should have to do something destructive also. Otherwise we should not be able to carry on, because this India today is ill able to afford the revenue that is being forced from it from year's end to year's end in order to support an insupportable weight of military and civil expenditure. The military expenditure takes 62 crores—an enormous sum for this country whose average income is two pence a day. Compare that with the military expenditure of any country on earth, and you will find that India is groaning under a weight that is insupportable. We should immediately set about restoring the scales, and if I could possibly have my way, we should get rid of three-quarters of the military expenditure. If we really succeed in demonstrating that we have won our freedom through non-violent means, the people of India will not require much argument to convince them that non-violence will also enable them to retain their freedom. Congress does not fear the bugbear of Afghan invasion, or invasion from Japan, certainly not invasion from Bolshevik Russia. Congress has no such fear whatever, and if we understand the lesson of non-violent non-co-

operation, then no nation on earth can bend us to its will. If the nation simply learns one single English word — and we have a similar expression in our Indian languages also — we can simply say, "No", and it is finished for any invader who casts hungry eyes on India. We are convinced that we do not need the arms that India is carrying.

For civil expenditure I must give an instance which I have given at several meetings. Here the Prime Minister gets fifty times the average income; the Viceroy in India gets five thousand times the average income. From this one example you can work out for yourselves what this civil expenditure also means to India. India cannot support this service, however efficient and able it may be. It is quite likely that, if I could send medical experts to every village in India, we should have no disease whatever, but since we cannot afford medical experts for every village in India, we have to be satisfied with quacks that we can get in our own villages. No country on earth can possibly live beyond its means; it can only take such services as it can afford to pay for. If I want strawberries and cream for every villager, I know it is a day-dream and I should be an idiot if I wished to give them to every villager. Well, I tell you that this military and civil expenditure is strawberries and cream. I cannot possibly deal out this food for my people.

I have very nearly finished my picture; if you find vacant spots, please remind me and I shall fill them by answering your questions.

Q. Would not Mr. Gandhi admit that within living memory the resisting power of the rural masses to the economic breakdown produced by a failure of crops had been enormously increased, and that the famine codes in India had been brought to a high degree of perfection at a time when the increased prosperity of the masses had rendered them unnecessary?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his experience was that the resisting power of the people had not increased, but that railway transport enabled people to get grain from other places which they had not formerly been able to obtain.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi give his authority for the statement that literacy had diminished in India during the last fifty years?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his authority was the Punjab Administration Reports, and said that he had published in *Young India* a study of the Punjab educational statistics.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi explain why the literacy figure was fourteen per cent of the men and only two per cent of the

women, and why illiteracy was higher in Kashmir and Hyderabad than in British India?

Mr. Gandhi replied that the women's education had been neglected, to the shame of the men. He could only conjecture, with regard to the figures for Kashmir, that if illiteracy was greater there, it was due to the negligence of the ruler or because the population was predominantly Mohammedan, but he thought that, as a matter of fact, it was six of the one and half a dozen of the other.

Q. Were the Brahmins in Congress helping the untouchables? If so, why was it necessary to dig wells for the untouchables? Could they not use the Brahmin wells? Was it not the Salvation Army and the missionaries who did most of the work among the untouchables?

Mr. Gandhi replied that he had given the reason why the untouchables could not use the Brahmin wells when he said it was the curse of Hinduism. If all the Brahmins had been reformed there would be no difficulty, but the majority of the workers engaged in digging wells and performing other services for the untouchables were themselves Brahmins, who considered they were doing some measure of penance for the suffering which their fellow-castemen had imposed on the untouchables. The work of the Salvation Army and the missionaries was of a different character from that done by the Hindu reformers, and he did not wish to go into that issue on that occasion.

Q. What effect would the proposed reforms have on the population of India? If better hygiene was introduced, it would lower the death rate and increase the population, and if a better standard of living was attained through individual industry and economy of public expenditure, was there anything which would hold back the birth-rate from again rising to keep the population hard up against subsistence level? Was not permanent improvement prevented without restriction of the birth-rate?

Mr. Gandhi replied that this problem was not a monopoly of India; it was a modern superstition. He did not regard a normal increase in birth-rate as an evil, and he would congratulate the Congress workers if they could show that, as a result of their hygienic and other reforms, the birth-rate of India had increased. He was not afraid of an increase of poverty if the birth-rate did increase. They were trying to inculcate among themselves the kind of life which regarded a normal increase in birth-rate as one thing and animal indulgence resulting in birth-rate as another, and there could not be too much stress laid upon education of that character. He had undertaken a prayerful study of the question and was in correspondence with Western thinkers all over Europe and America on the subject, and he had come definitely to the conclusion that the methods of birth-control suggested by modern reformers would be found upon experience to have been death-traps. Even though it might be proved that in England, Holland, France, other parts of Europe and some parts of America, this method of controlling birth-rate

might have done some good, it could only do immeasurable harm in India, where it was not possible to give these remedies to the people. It was wicked for anybody to suggest these remedies for India when India could not understand these methods in any shape or form.

Q. Would Mr. Gandhi state briefly on what principle a strong, stable Executive could be framed for India?

Mr. Gandhi replied that a strong, stable Executive Government could best be framed by getting strong, stable hearts, and there was no dearth of such hearts in India. He had not dwelt on the political side, because the future of India as he had been picturing it, did not admit of much political treatment. The cure of the disease of economic misery was economic, but he was dabbling in politics because it was impossible to deal with economics unless he also dealt with politics. He had given his political faith from many platforms, and had taken it for granted that the audience knew the principles which guided Congress, but he was willing to give his political faith again if desired. He believed with Tolstoy that that country was best governed which was governed the least, and if Congress had its way, the politician would not be allowed to invade the privacy and sanctity of the home, but would be called upon to keep his place.

Q. How far was the very honourable attitude of the Brahmin reformers shared by caste Hindus throughout the country?

Mr. Gandhi said the attitude was very largely shared by those who called themselves Congressmen, but there was very great headway to make. The harvest was ripe, but the labourers were undoubtedly few. There were a few thousand, whilst tens of thousands were needed in order to get rid of the corruption which had injured the fibre of the nation. He could say with assurance that untouchability was going fast, because some had given up their lives, and counted them of no cost, in order to remove that curse. Either Hinduism would be broken to bits or untouchability would disappear before many years were past.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Gandhi if he would be good enough to say something more about the political situation.

Mr. Gandhi said that the Congress wanted nothing short of complete political independence, and therefore complete control over the army, foreign relations and finance. The easiest method of getting at Congress mentality was to step into Indian shoes and imagine the English transported on to India and Indians inhabiting Great Britain. If the Indian inhabitants of the British Isles then said, "You are not fit to govern yourselves; we shall have to see whether you can handle your army or defend yourselves from the hordes that will descend on you from China, Tibet, Afghanistan or Russia," the British would say, "We can take care of ourselves, or at any rate we shall try." The most that could happen would be that the Indians, as a nation, would be wiped out of existence. The iron had entered the souls of thousands of

Indians who were determined to throw off the foreign yoke at any cost, however much the British Lion might put out his claws and defy the civil disobedience that India might offer. Great Britain had tremendous financial interests in India, estimated by Lord Rothermere at a thousand million pounds. Those interests would be protected by Indians, if they were legitimate interests, for the battle was not one of vengeance but for the exercise of the Indian's birthright. The Indians were not as armed as the British; they did not know the science of fighting; they were called a gentle race, and he was glad to belong to a gentle race. But weakness of body did not matter when they had stout hearts. Indian women had stout hearts, and had received lathi blows with breasts forward, not turning their backs as if they were escaping-villagers who had received no education from English schools, and the greatest heroine among them was a woman who could hardly read a letter in her own mother tongue. They acted like this in order that they might gain liberty for their country. The masses in India were awakening, and it was too late to persuade them that good alien rule was better than bad indigenous rule. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had said that good government was no substitute for self-government. The British were past-masters in the art of making mistakes, and Lord Salisbury said they knew the art of blundering through to success. Why should the British deprive the Indians of their right to make mistakes? India was impatient of the control which denied her that right. Although his creed was non-violence, he would risk the calamity to which Sir Henry Gidney had referred. But what mistakes could they make? The minorities should all have protection, but there were ways and ways of granting it. India must regain the freedom which she had lost so long, with British help if it were given, without it if it were withheld. He appealed not only to the British but to the whole of humanity that this nation, which was trying an experiment in non-violence on a scale unknown to history, should receive its full measure of support from the nations of the world.

Did the British know whether they had conferred benefit on India, or did the Indians know? Would the British be judged by their own testimony or by the testimony of men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, Gokhale, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta—men who doted on England and were proud of the Western civilization, who said that, although Englishmen meant well, their rule had on the whole been harmful to India because they left an emasculated nation? If after a century of British rule the result of withdrawing was expected to be fighting amongst Indians themselves, who was to blame? British rule had left them utterly helpless. He recognized that they were helpless, and he wanted British help, but on his terms; India could not afford to have door-keepers who demanded such high wages. If India paid them seventy-five per cent of her earnings, how could she keep body and soul together on the remaining tweny-five per cent? It was a matter of simple arithmetic. The

nation was impoverished by the many burdens under which it was groaning, and as he had travelled incessantly all over India from 1916 to 1931, except for the periods when he was in prison, he could claim to know the condition of the villages better than any British officer.

He was prepared to evolve his own Constitution, and when the minorities question was flung into his face, his patience was exhausted. What was this bugbear of the minority problem? Congress was not merely one of the many political organizations. It was predominantly the one organization that had given battle and had suffered. Hundreds of villages were oppressed, their crops were destroyed and thousands of rupees' worth of land confiscated and sold. This suffering was voluntarily gone through at the bidding of the Congress. Who would go through that suffering for a mess of pottage? He had come to plead with what was finest in the British character and to tell them the whole truth. If, at the end of that chapter, he was told that nothing could be done unless he could close with the Moslems and everybody else, then he would go, but the British would have committed another blunder.

They must remember that the Round Table Conference delegates were all nominated by the Prime Minister, not elected by the members of the House of Commons whom no one could remove. They represented no one but the will of the Prime Minister. The Congress was the only organization representing the whole of India. Those who fought and went to gaols were not all Hindus. They had several thousand Mussalmans amongst them, and Sikhs and Christians too. The Congress might be called a majority community if they liked, and the Congress had its own scheme of solving the minorities problem. The scheme presented for acceptance was an organic scheme in the cause of unity. The Congress majority did not speak as Hindus; Hindus could be reduced to a minority. The Constitution to be framed was for Indians, not for Hindus. How could the Congress parcel out India among several sections of Hindus, and several sections of Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and the rest? Imagine the whole nation vivisected and torn to pieces; how could it be made into a nation with all these divided groups? That was what the minorities wanted. These minorities had a perfect right to full civil, social and religious liberty, and they could appeal to the electorate for election in the open field. Why did they want special electorates? Why did the Anglo-Indians fear to trust to the general mass of the electorate? Not because they were Anglo-Indians, but because they had not served India. The Parsees did not want any special reservations, simply because they had served India, and were sure to be represented by right of service. The grand-daughters[1] of Dadabhai Naoroji, brought up in the lap of luxury, had so served India that no one could deny them the right to represent the people. If members of other minorities entered by the open door and served India, they also would be elected. There was no room

[1] Perin Captain and Nargis Captain

for those who wanted to maintain special privileges. It was a shame that Englishmen should claim privileges in so poor a country and special seats on a poor people's legislature. Why should they not depend on the vote of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and everyone to enter the legislature? They need not want to enter by the vote of a handful of Englishmen. The English still had power enough. The Indians still needed their unrivalled skill and faculty for organization, probably their capital; why did they fear for their security? They could live in India in perfect safety. If they asked for a passport of safety, he could understand, but if they asked for a special privilege to enter the legislature, he would not be a party to that guilt. There were not two millions of them. It was a claim that would be rejected before any tribunal of judges. At any rate he would in no case be party to the vivisection of a whole nation.

International Affairs, November 1931

138. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

October 21, 1931

CHI. PREMA,

I have started getting letters from you now. I am eager to reply to them at length, but I have no time for that. Please, therefore, be satisfied with this acknowledgment.

Why do you fear that I would yield on any essential matter?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10265

139. SPEECH AT CHURCH HOUSE[1]

LONDON,
October 21, 1931

I ask all Englishmen to study the case for India and, if they feel that my position is correct, they must render all the assistance they can in order to make the R.T.C. proceed to a successful issue. But I see no hope. Lord Sankey is marking time, and today we are no nearer success, no nearer even to the great issue, viz., 'is or is not India going to get Complete Independence? Is

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". The meeting, presided over by the Archbishop of York, was attended by thirty-two bishops and other church dignitaries.

or is not India going to get full control over her defence, finance and external affairs?' We have not even discussed these things. We have been spending all our time in discussing things of a second-rate or even third-rate importance. The communal question, which is said to bar the progress, should not have been used for that purpose.

Young India, 5-11-1931

140. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

LONDON,
[About *October 21, 1931*]

Q. Is it not unfortunate that though you represent a strong body of opinion you are not today the leader of a united India?

A. I am not. But that is because unity is impossible here. Don't you see it is a packed Conference? If we had been asked to elect our own representatives, I should have represented and spoken for them all, excepting, of course, the princes who cannot speak except as vassals of the Government on whose sufferance they live. Whereas, we have here today Mussalmans talking as ultra-loyalists who only a little while ago were intolerant even of British connection under any terms.

Q. Then what *The Daily Herald* said is true?

A. No, I think the Prime Minister is right in saying that the Government are not trying deliberately to break up the Conference. But they might have to wind it up for the simple reason that they cannot, in all decency, prolong the agony. For it is nothing less. We have been talking and talking about points which do not touch the fundamentals. What is the use of discussing allocation of finance between the Federation and the Provincial Government, when we do not know what finance we will have, what authority we are going to exercise and what army we shall have to pay for.

Young India, 5-11-1931

[1] Mahadev Desai, from whose "London Letter" the report is extracted, does not mention when or by whom the questions were asked. But he reports it along with the "Speech at Church House", the preceding item.

141. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

October 22, 1931

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

It will be a great triumph of yours if you convert Dr. A.[1] Having suffered like him in S.A.[2], Dr. A. always commands my sympathy in all he says. He needs the gentlest treatment.

Yours sincerely,
M.K.G.

From a photostat: G.N. 2188-1

142. INTERVIEW TO "THE STATESMAN"

LONDON,
October 22, 1931

Mr. Gandhi declared that he feared the Conference would fail unless the Government offered a liberal and determined plan, of which up to the present there had been no inkling.

If the Conference fails, I very much fear there will be no choice before the Congress except a revival of the boycott and civil disobedience as early as is necessary.

Mr. Gandhi asserted that the charge that the Government was to blame for the Round Table Conference delays was true, but he was unable to say that the delay began when the Government became a National one.

Asked which was, in his opinion, the best way of arriving at a communal settlement, Mr. Gandhi said it was for the Government to declare that constitution-making would proceed irrespective of a settlement of differences, and if a settlement in private was not reached, a judicial tribunal would be appointed to decide the claims of the three rival parties.

Mr. Gandhi declared himself completely puzzled how *The Daily Herald* got the information regarding the correspondence between him and the Premier. This correspondence, he stated, was known only to his immediate co-workers, and there must have been a leakage.

In this correspondence he made no charge against Mr. MacDonald of a change of policy.

[1] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
[2] South Africa

Commenting on the General Election, the Congress leader said that the absence of any mention of India in election speeches and literature showed that all parties had one policy towards India.

The Statesman, 23-10-1931

143. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
October 22, 1931

CHAIRMAN: . . . The reason why the States would be willing to go to a Federal Court would be because, in the exercise of their sovereign power, they would consent and confer jurisdiction upon that Court. . . . I only venture to suggest for your consideration, and not for an answer now, that you could, in just the same way as you confer that jurisdiction, by the exercise of your sovereign power, on a new Court like the Federal Court, also confer it on the Privy Council.

MR. GANDHI: I should like to put a question to Sir Mirza Ismail, if I may. Sir Mirza, do you contemplate in any circumstances any right of appeal on the part of the subjects of Indian States to this Federal Court?

SIR MIRZA ISMAIL: I think so, Mahatmaji. In regard to matters arising under the Constitution or federal laws they would, in the ordinary course, have the right of appeal to the highest judicial tribunal competent to deal with such questions. . . .

LORD PEEL: . . . There should, first of all, be a small impartial committee which should investigate the questions connected with the States' contributions, ceded territories, the position of the Maritime States, and so on. Now, the question of the Maritime States need not necessarily be settled, I think, before the Bill becomes an Act; but the other matters—the question of the States' contributions and the ceded territories—have to be gone into, and gone into carefully. The first suggestion is, therefore, that this small impartial Committee shall deal with those problems and, of course, report as quickly as possible. . . .

The second Committee suggested to be set up is to some extent varied from the original proposal. It was to be a Committee which should deal with the various problems submitted to it, and might have some freedom even to make alternative suggestions on matters of principle. Well, there was a good deal of anxiety expressed in some quarters that that might, I will not say lead to the tearing-up of the principles set out in the Finance Subcommittee's report, but at least might give too much latitude to that Committee. The new suggestion

cuts down considerably the functions of this Committee, and limits its powers. It is suggested that it should be a fact-finding Committee, to be appointed in India, consisting of officials familiar with questions of finance, including, of course, States' finance. . . .

I hope that these suggestions will meet the views which have been expressed by the members of the Committee. I can sum them up very shortly.

There is, first of all, the general acceptance, as a basis for drafting the Bill, of the principles laid down by the Finance Subcommittee. Then there are these two Committees to be set up, the one a small body dealing with the question of the States, and the other a fact-finding Committee which can get to work rapidly and provide the material on which final decisions are taken. Then, before the end of the Conference, the Government must state its proposals and make its own recommendations as to the best method of consulting the parties concerned on the few points which may be left over to be decided after these Committees have reported. . . .

CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to Lord Peel. Certainly great strides have been made towards coming to an agreement, and I think the differences have nearly all been composed. I hope we shall do our best to accept that.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: My Lord, I entirely endorse what Lord Peel has said; and this represents what was really in our minds.

DR. AMBEDKAR: I should just like to say one thing. Lord Peel said just now that there was general agreement regarding the principles enunciated in the Report of the Federal Finance Subcommittee. Now, whatever may be the view of the other members of the Federal Structure Committee, I should for myself like to make this reservation, that I certainly do not agree with the principles enunciated by the Federal Finance Subcommittee; and I should for myself like to say that I have no objection to the appointment of this Committee, provided it is distinctly understood that the Committee has a right to suggest alterations and amendments of the principles, in order that the future financial system for the Federal Government may be a sound system.

MR. GANDHI: I should like to say a few things, Lord Chancellor, with your permission. I have very serious misgivings about the result of this proposed Committee, although the scope of it has been very considerably altered, and therefore it is less open to objection. I would, however, in order not to press my objection at this stage, suggest, along the very lines adumbrated by Lord Peel, that this question might be taken up at a later stage when we are about to gather the loose ends. He says—I think very properly—that His Majesty's Government cannot at the present stage say what would be the machinery adopted in order that the conclusions of the proposed Committee might be

examined by some Committee or some body that would be in a way representative of the Round Table Conference. I think that is a very sound objection. There will, undoubtedly, be several matters left over by the time the deliberations of this Committee and of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference are concluded.

If rumour in this case is not baseless, we may hope that November 10th will be the final day of our sitting—I mean the sitting of the Round Table Conference also—and, if that is so and I hope it is so—there could be things left over with regard to certain details, and perhaps also with regard to fundamental principles, for which some machinery will have to be devised. It might then be proper to endorse the appointment of the Committee which Lord Peel suggests, and which His Majesty's Government seem to desire; and, if that is done, my objections need not be pressed. But, at the same time, I should like to state my objection.

As members are aware, on behalf of the Congress there is a claim or demand that there should be an impartial investigation of these obligations, financial and fiscal, that the National Government will be called on to shoulder. It seems to me it would be putting the cart before the horse for me, representing the Congress, to say there should be an allocation of these debts, and that an Expert Committee should be called upon to make that allocation, when I know that, at some stage or other, I would be raising objections to the obligations themselves. If that Committee knew that the obligations were not so formidable as they appear to be today, their allocation would be of a different character; or, if they are absolutely rigid and not a rupee is to be taken away from them, that also would affect the character of the allocation. I have therefore the gravest misgivings as to the results of the deliberations of that Committee, and as to the action that I would then be justified in taking on behalf of the Congress.

My second objection is that this Committee, although its scope will be restricted, will really be doing the work that the National Government or the Federal Government should do. If His Majesty's Government feel insecure as to the ability of the Federal Government to discharge its obligations from the source of revenue that will be accepted as common, surely there are other methods of giving them a sense of security as to the ability of the National Government to cope with the obligations that might legitimately fall on its shoulders. It cannot be done, in my humble opinion, through a Committee of this character.

When I agreed roughly to the source of revenue to be common, I had in mind undoubtedly that I should be able to press for total repeal of the Salt Tax, merely by way of instance; but I should not in any way bind myself to the other taxes. I know that legally I do not do so; but if there is a recommendation on the part of the Committee, or if there are some calculations based upon the rigidity of the taxes that are enumerated there, I should again feel that I had not done justice to the cause that I represent.

Therefore, for these three reasons, I have very grave misgivings as to giving my consent to the appointment of this Committee and finding myself debarred from raising objections of a fundamental character. So what really would please me, as representing the Congress, is that this matter might be left over entirely for the National Government to investigate and decide. It should be enough just now for His Majesty's Government to know and feel absolutely reassured—and for that they are entitled to any assurance, legal or otherwise, that they may desire—but this delicate thing (to me it is a delicate thing) should be left over to the National Government. For these reasons, if this Committee wishes to express an opinion on the point now instantly, then I must press these objections of mine. Otherwise, in order that we may have an agreed settlement in this matter, I would suggest that the matter may be for the present left over, so that, by the time we approach the end of our labours, we shall all be in a better position to make up our minds. . . .

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: . . . I take it that what Your Lordship suggests now is that this fact-finding Committee will only find facts in accordance with the principles laid down in the Report?

LORD PEEL: Yes.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: Well, if that be so, I have no objection at all; but again I should like, like both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, to be satisfied in regard to the procedure that is to be adopted for coming to final decisions, because I take it, after the point was raised by Mr. Jinnah, that it was not intended to come to any decisions immediately after the Report has been submitted, but to arrive at tentative proposals, and that those tentative proposals will be laid before a Committee or before the whole Conference, or that you will devise some sort of machinery in order to arrive at final decisions. If that be the understanding, then I have no objection at all.

MR. GANDHI: But it is clearly subject to the principles that Lord Peel himself adumbrated.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: As regards the other Committee suggested by Lord Peel, I have no objection to that.

CHAIRMAN: I think the position now is that, thanks to the tact and good sense of the parties, we have arrived at a compromise which is a workable compromise; and we are very much indebted to Lord Peel and those who are associated with him for having brought us this happy result. I quite appreciate Mr. Gandhi's caveat, and that will appear in the record of the proceedings; and I also appreciate Dr. Ambedkar's caveat. That, however, does not prevent us at all from accepting this very helpful compromise. We have made a very long step forward towards our future work. We will report in that sense; and let me express, at any rate, my personal thanks and your personal thanks to Lord Peel and the Sub-committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 252-5

144. LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 23, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Inadvertently, I have no doubt, you have omitted to sign your letter, but as the address is fully given, I am hoping that this letter will reach you.

You will realize that I could not offhand give you the date, but since you would gladly study the whole question, I would find out the numbers of *Young India* in which the articles[1] appeared and send the references to you. I shall also find out what is possible to prove with reference to the other Provinces, apart from the deductions that I have drawn from the Punjab. Meanwhile, I have no difficulty in drawing the deduction for the rest of the Provinces from the examples of the Punjab and Burma. Whatever may be the strides made by the Punjab during the past five or ten years cannot affect the argument that I have advanced to you.

About Kashmir, as I said in reply, mine was merely a conjecture, but since you are so interested in the question, I shall try and find out the true state of education in Kashmir.

[1] Quoting figures from a Punjab Administration Report concerning education in the Punjab; *vide* "Speech at Chatham House", pp. 193-206. The addressee had questioned Gandhiji's assertion that "literacy had diminished in British India in the last fifty years."

You are quite right in feeling certain that, if there were any error in my reasoning or the facts that I stated, I should immediately correct them, and whilst I should try to verify more fully the statements that I made, you will also on your part oblige me by giving me such information as may be in your possession and as may help me to understand the truth.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C.W. 9395. Courtesy : India Office Library

145. *INTERVIEW TO REUTER*

LONDON,
October 23, 1931

Mr. Gandhi specially interviewed by Reuter today with reference to a report published in London that he had cabled to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that nothing could be expected from the Round Table Conference,[1] said that that was his feeling, but it must be remembered that his cable was a reply to Pandit Jawaharlal's cable giving a graphic description of the agrarian situation in the United Provinces and he was referring to that matter.

Asked by Reuter whether the interpretation could be given to his cable that he was not giving the Round Table Conference a chance of success, Mr. Gandhi said that there was evidently some misconception. His cable to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had nothing to do with the proceedings of the Round Table Conference and referred only to the situation in the United Provinces.

At any rate, as far as he was concerned, Mr. Gandhi was giving the Conference every chance possible for him to give. He was endeavouring to help where he could, putting no hindrance in the way. If the Conference failed, it would fail because of its inherent weakness and because, as he had pointed out, the British Government was not responding to the Congress claim.

The Hindu, 24-10-1931

[1] *Vide* "Cable to Jawaharlal Nehru", p. 173.

146. EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
October 23, 1931

MR. GANDHI: Lord Chancellor and fellow Delegates, I feel considerable hesitation in speaking on this subject[1], which has been rendered so highly technical by the course that the discussion has taken; but I feel that I owe a duty to you and a duty to the Congress which I represent. I know that the Congress holds some decided views on the question of the Federal Court—views which would be, I am afraid, very distasteful to a large number of the Delegates here. Whatever they are, seeing that they are held by a responsible body, it is, I suppose, necessary that I should at least present them to you.

I see that the discussions are based, if not upon utter distrust, upon considerable distrust of ourselves—that the National Government will not be able to conduct its affairs in an impartial manner. This communal tangle also is colouring the discussion. The Congress, on the other hand, bases the whole of its policy on trust and on confidence that, when we have come to power, we shall also come to a sense of our responsibility, and all the communal bias will drop out. But should it prove otherwise, then, too, the Congress would run the boldest risks imaginable because, without running those risks, we shall not be able to exercise real responsibility. So long as we have the mental reservation that we have to rest upon some foreign power for our guidance and for conducting our affairs at a critical juncture, so long, in my opinion, there is no responsibility. One feels also embarrassed by the fact that we really are trying to discuss this thing without knowing where we shall be. I should give one opinion if Defence was not under the control of the responsible Government, and another opinion if Defence was under our own control. I proceed upon the assumption that, if we are to enjoy responsibility in the real sense of the term, Defence will be under our control—under national control in every sense of the term.

[1] The Federal Court

I entirely sympathize with Dr. Ambedkar in the difficulty that he raised. It is all very well to have a judgment of the highest tribunal; but if the writ of that tribunal does not run beyond the confines of its own Court, that tribunal will be a laughing-stock of the nation and of the whole world. What is then to be done in connection with that writ? What Mr. Jinnah said, of course, came home—that the military would be there; but it will be the Crown that will run the writ. Then I would say, let the High Court also, or the Federal Court, be under the Crown. In my opinion, the Supreme Court has to be, if we are responsible, under the responsible Government; and therefore the process of carrying out the writ has also to be made good by the responsible Government. Personally, I do not share the fears that actuate Dr. Ambedkar; but I think that his objection is a very reasonable objection, and that a Court which gives judgments should also have perfect confidence that its judgments will be respected by those who are affected by its judgments. Hence I would suggest that the Judges should have the power of framing rules in order to regulate matters in connection with those judgments. Naturally the enforcement will not rest with the Court—the enforcement will rest with the executive authority; but the executive authority would have to conform to the rules that might be framed by the Court.

Somehow or other we fancy that this Constitution is going to give us every detail in connection with the composition of this Court. I respectfully differ from that view in its entirety. I think that this Constitution will give us the framework of the Federal Court and will define the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, but the rest will be left to the Federal Government to evolve. I cannot possibly understand that the Constitution is also going to tell us how many years the Judges are to serve, or whether they are to resign or retire at the age of 70 or 95 or 90 or 65. I think that these will be matters to be taken up by the Federal Court; hence I propose a drastic method, for what it may be worth, that the Constitution will give us, to start with, the Judges, and these Judges will serve for a fixed, definite period, so that the responsible Government might not have to shoulder the burden of a Federal Court or a Supreme Court, whatever we choose to call it, which may not answer the needs of the country.

We bring in the Crown at the end of almost every sentence. I must confess that, according to the conception of the Congress, there is no question of the Crown. India desires complete independence; and if India enjoys complete independence, whoever the supreme authority there may be, that supreme authority will

be responsible for the appointment of Judges and several other matters which today belong to the Crown.

It is a fundamental belief with the Congress that, whatever the course the Constitution takes, there should be our own Privy Council in India. The Privy Council's portals, if it is really to give relief to the poor people in matters of the highest importance, should be open to the poorest people in the land, and I think that is impossible if the English Privy Council is to decide our fate in matters of the greatest importance. There, too, I would guide ourselves by implicit trust in the ability of our Judges to pronounce wise and absolutely impartial decisions. I know that, in making great changes, we run always very great risks. The Privy Council here is an ancient institution, and an institution which justly commands very great regard and respect; but, in spite of all the respect that I have for the Privy Council, I cannot bring myself to believe that we will not be able to have a Privy Council of our own which will command universal esteem. Because England can boast of very fine institutions, I do not think that therefore we must be tied down to those institutions. If we are to learn anything whatsoever from England, we should learn to erect those institutions ourselves. Otherwise there is a poor chance for this nation whose representatives we claim to be. Therefore, I would ask us all to have sufficient trust and confidence in ourselves at the present moment. Our beginning may be very small, but if we have strong, true and honest hearts to give decisions, it does not matter in the slightest degree that we have not got the legal traditions which the Judges in England claim and very properly boast of before the whole world.

That being my view, I feel that this Federal Court should be a Court of the widest jurisdiction possible, and not decide cases only that arise from the administration of federal laws. Federal laws, of course, will be there, but it should have the amplest jurisdiction to try all the cases that may come from the four corners of India. It is, then, a question where the subjects of the Princes will be and where they will come in. Subject to what the Princes may have to say, I would suggest, with the greatest deference and with equal hesitation, that there will be, I hope, at the end of it—if we are going to make something out of this Conference—something which will be common to all India, to all the inhabitants of India, whether they come from the States or whether they come from the rest of India. If there is something in common between all of us, naturally the Supreme Court will be the guardian of the rights that we may consider to be common to all.

What those rights should be, I am totally unable to say. It is entirely for the Princes to say what they can be and what they cannot be. In view of the fact that they represent here not only their own Houses but have taken on themselves the tremendous responsibility of representing their subjects also at this Conference, I would certainly make a humble but fervent appeal to them that they would of their own accord come forth with some scheme whereby their subjects also may feel that, though they are not directly represented at this table, their voices will find adequate expression through these noble Princes themselves.

So far as the salary is concerned, you will laugh, naturally, but the Congress does believe that it is an impossible thing for the Congress, which represents a nation of dwarfs, to vie with the English nation, which represents today giants in wealth. India, whose average income is 2d. per day, can ill afford to pay the high salaries that are commanded here. I feel that it is a thing which we will have to unlearn if we are going to have voluntary rule in India. It is all very well, so long as the British bayonet is there, to squeeze out of these poor people salaries of Rs. 10,000 a month or salaries of Rs. 5,000 a month or salaries of Rs. 20,000 a month. I do not consider, however, that my country has sunk to such an extent that it will not be able to produce sufficient men who will live somewhat in correspondence with the lives of the millions and still serve India nobly, truly and well. I do not believe for one moment that legal talent has to be bought if it is to remain honest. I recall the names of Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Manomohan Ghosh, Badruddin Tyabji and a host of others, who gave their legal talent absolutely free of charge and served their country faithfully and well. The taunt may be flung in my face that they did so because they were able to charge princely fees in their own professional work. I reject that argument, for the simple reason that I have known every one of them with the exception of Manomohan Ghosh. It was not that they had plenty of money and therefore gave freely of their talent when India required it. It had no connection with their ability to have ease and luxury. I have seen them living the life of poor people and in perfect contentment. I can point out to you several lawyers of distinction who, if they had not come to the national cause, would today be occupying seats on the High Court Benches in all parts of India. I have therefore absolute confidence that, when we come to conduct our own affairs and so on, we will do so in a patriotic spirit and taking account of the miserable state that the millions of India occupy.

One word more and I have finished. Seeing that the Congress holds the view that this Federal Court or Supreme Court — whichever you call it — will occupy the position of the highest tribunal beyond which no man who is an inhabitant of India can go, its jurisdiction in my opinion will be limitless. It will have jurisdiction, so far as federal matters are concerned, to the extent that the Princes are also willing; but I cannot possibly imagine that we shall have two Supreme Courts—one in order to deal with merely federal law and another to deal with all the other matters that are not covered by the federal administration or the Federal Government. Because at the present moment, I suppose, as things go, the Federal Government will concern itself with the minimum of subjects, matters of the highest moment will be extra-federal. Who is to adjudicate upon these extra-federal matters if not this very Supreme Court? Therefore, this Supreme Court or Federal Court will exercise double jurisdiction, if necessary treble jurisdiction. The greater the power that we give to this Federal Court, I think, the greater the confidence we shall be able to inspire in the world and also in the nation itself.

I am sorry to have taken up these precious minutes of the time of the Conference, but I felt that, in spite of my great reluctance to speak to you on this Federal Court, I must give you the views that many of us in the Congress have been holding for a large number of years, and which we would, if we could, spread throughout the length and breadth of India. I know the terrible handicap under which I am labouring. All the most distinguished lawyers are arrayed against me; the Princes also are probably arrayed against me so far as the salaries and jurisdiction of this Court are concerned. But I would be guilty of neglect of duty to the Congress and to you if I did not give you the views that the Congress and I hold so strongly on the matter of the Federal Court.

CHAIRMAN: We are much obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for so very frankly and so very fearlessly expressing his view. We are here to exchange views and to hear arguments upon them; that is the object of the Conference. If he will allow me to say so, when you know what a man wants, you can do your best to meet him, and he will no doubt do his best to meet you. The difficulty is to negotiate with a man who does not know what he wants. I am very much obliged to Mr. Gandhi for putting his views before us like that. It will always be my ambition to try and go as far as possible to meet them, and, indeed, as far as possible to meet anybody's views. I am

sure we shall have that spirit of accommodation all round the Federal Structure Committee. Meanwhile, let me express my personal thanks to Mr. Gandhi for putting before us so very frankly and so very fearlessly what his views upon this subject are.

MR. JINNAH: Mahatma Gandhi made a reference to what I said. I did not quite catch that.

MR. GANDHI: You see, you put Dr. Ambedkar in a quandary by saying what should happen, and Dr. Ambedkar was afraid of the logical consequences of his own remarks. Therefore, I simply brought your name in and said that, if India is divided into parts, one governed by the Crown and the other governed by herself, we are likely to fall between two stools.

MR. JINNAH: I did not express any opinion.

MR. GANDHI: No, I know you did not express any opinion; but you said: "I assume that Defence is a Crown subject."

MR. JINNAH: I did not say "I assume". I said that, so far as the report of the Federal Structure Committee has gone, it is assumed that Defence is a Crown subject. I expressed no opinion.

MR. GANDHI: That is right.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 267-8

147. SPEECH AT GATHERING OF SCHOOLBOYS[1]

ETON,
[*October 23, 1931*][2]

You occupy a big place in England. Some of you will become prime ministers and generals in future and I am anxious to enter your hearts whilst your character is still being moulded and whilst it is easy yet to enter your hearts. I should place before you certain facts as opposed to the false history traditionally imparted to you. Among high officials I find ignorance, meaning not absence of knowledge but knowledge based on false data, and I want you to have true data before you as I think of you, not as Empire-builders, but as members of a nation which will

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders".

[2] Gandhiji in his diary says that he went to Eton on this date in the evening and addressed a meeting of youths.

have ceased exploiting other nations and become the guardian of the peace of the world, not by force of arms but by its moral strength. Well, then, I tell you that there is nothing like a Hindu case[1], at least so far as I am concerned, for in the matter of my country's freedom I am no more a Hindu than you are. There is a Hindu case put by the Hindu Mahasabha representatives who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics, and am pleading with them that, representing as they do the great majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want, and the atmosphere would be as clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved amongst them all these years, I think they do not care for these pettifogging things, they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of electoral seats and administrative posts. This bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities which are not India, but which are the blotting sheets of London and other Western cities which consciously or unconsciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance before the great question of Indian freedom of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented rebellious India—true, ours is a non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less. Freedom of India is superior to the disease which for the time is corroding some portions of the community, and if the constitutional question is satisfactorily solved, the communal distemper will immediately vanish. The moment the alien wedge is removed the divided communities are bound to unite. There is therefore no Hindu case, and if there is one it must go by the board. If you study this question, it will profit you nothing and when you go into its exasperating details you will, very likely, prefer to see us drowned in the Thames.

I am telling you God's truth when I say that the communal question does not matter and should not worry you at all. But, if you will study history, study the much bigger question: How did millions of people make up their minds to adopt non-violence

[1] Gandhiji had been asked to present the Hindu case just as "Mr. Shaukat Ali gave us the Muslim case".

and how they adhered to it? Study, not man in his animal nature, man following the law of the jungle, but study man in all his glory. Those engaged in communal squabbles are like specimens in a lunatic asylum. But study men laying down their lives, without hurting anyone, in the cause of their country's freedom. Study man in his glory, man following the law of his higher nature, the law of love, so that when you grow to manhood you will have improved your heritage. It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over ours. No one chained a slave without chaining himself. And no nation kept another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation. It is a most sinful connection, a most unnatural connection that is existing at present between England and India and I want you to bless our mission because we are naturally entitled to our freedom which is our birthright and we are doubly entitled to it by virtue of the penance and suffering we have undergone. I want you, when you grow up, to make a unique contribution to the glory of your nation, by emancipating it from its sin of exploitation, and thus contribute to the progress of mankind.

The other question was what would happen to India with the rapacious Princes when the Englishmen retire from India. Gandhiji assured the young men there was no danger from the Princes, but if they ran amok, they were easier to deal with than Englishmen, that their very weakness would prevent them from doing any mischief, and that India's glory would lie, not in driving out the English, but in converting them from exploiters into friends, remaining there to protect India's honour in time of need.

Young India, 12-11-1931

148. *NOTE FOR MIRZA ISMAIL*

[On or after *October 23, 1931*][1]

It will be a glorious thing if the question can be satisfactorily settled.

M. K. G.

From a photostat : G.N. 2188-9

[1] This was writted on a letter dated October 23 from the addressee, which read : "I saw the Aga Khan last night. He said that he was meeting the Muslim Delegation on Monday and that he would mention the matter to them and let me know how they viewed it. . . . I feel hopeful that a satisfactory settlement of the vexed question may soon be reached."

149. SPEECH AT INDIAN MAJLIS[1]

OXFORD,
October 24, 1931

Muslims and Sikhs are all well organized. The untouchables are not. There is very little political consciousness among them and they are so horribly treated that I want to save them against themselves. If they had separate electorates, their lives would be miserable in villages which are the strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy. It is the superior class of Hindus who have to do penance for having neglected the untouchables for ages. That penance can be done by active social reform and by making the lot of the untouchables more bearable by acts of service, but not by asking for separate electorates for them. By giving them separate electorates you will throw the apple of discord between the untouchables and the orthodox. You must understand I can tolerate the proposal for special representation of the Mussalmans and the Sikhs only as a necessary evil. It would be a positive danger for the untouchables. I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the untouchables is a modern manufacture of a Satanic Government. The only thing needed is to put them on the voters' list, and provide for fundamental rights for them in the Constitution. In case they are unjustly treated and their representative is deliberately excluded they would have the right to special election tribunal which would give them complete protection. It should be open to these tribunals to order the unseating of an elected candidate and election of the excluded man.

Separate electorates to the untouchables will ensure them bondage in perpetuity. The Mussalmans will never cease to be Mussalmans by having separate electorates. Do you want the untouchables to remain untouchables for ever? Well, the separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. What is needed is destruction of untouchability and when you have done it, the bar sinister which has been imposed by an insolent "superior" class upon an "inferior" class will be destroyed. When you have destroy-

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders". Desai says the report has been "amplified by what he said about the same thing on other occasions".

ed the bar sinister, to whom will you give the separate electorates? Look at the history of Europe. Have you got separate electorates for the working classes or women? With adult franchise, you give the untouchables complete security. Even the orthodox Hindus would have to approach them for votes.

How, then, you ask, does Dr. Ambedkar, their representative, insist on separate electorates for them? I have the highest regard for Dr. Ambedkar. He has every right to be bitter. That he does not break our heads is an act of self-restraint on his part. He is today so very much saturated with suspicion that he cannot see anything else. He sees in every Hindu a determined opponent of the untouchables, and it is quite natural. The same thing happened to me in my early days in South Africa where I was hounded out by the Europeans wherever I went.It is qu ite natural for him to vent his wrath. But the separate electorates that he seeks will not give him social reform. He may himself mount to power and position, but nothing good will accrue to the untouchables. I can say all this with authority, having lived with the untouchables and having shared their joys and sorrows all these years.

Q. Do you still believe in the good faith of England?

A. I believe in the good faith of England to the extent that I believe in the good faith of human nature. I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal. And inasmuch as I know only of the poetry of love, you should not be surprised that I trust the English people. I have often been bitter and I have often said to myself, "When will this camouflage end? When will these people cease to exploit these poor peoples?" But instinctively I get the reply: "That is the heritage tha6t they have had from Rome." I must conduct myself in accordance with the dictates of the law of love, hoping and expecting in the long run to affect the English nature.

Q. What is your view about the industrialization of India?

A. Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and

less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

Q. What do you think of the I.C.S.?

A. The I.C.S. is not really the Indian Civil Service, it is the E.C.S., the English Service. I say this knowing that there are Indians in the Service. Whilst India is a subject nation they cannot but serve the interests of England. But supposing India secures freedom and supposing able Englishmen are prepared to serve India, then they would be truly national servants. At the present time, under the name of I.C.S. they serve the exploiting Government. In a free India, Englishmen will come out to India either in a spirit of adventure, or from penance and willingly serve on a small salary and put up with the rigours of Indian climate, instead of being a burden on poor India whilst they draw inordinately large salaries and try to live there in extra English extravagance and reproduce even the English climate. We would have them as honoured comrades, but if there is even a lurking desire to lord it over us and behave as a superior race, they are not wanted.

Q. Do you say that you are completely fit for independence?

A. If we are not, we will try to be. But the question of fitness does not arise, for the simple reason that those who have robbed

us of independence have to render it back. Supposing you repented of your conduct, you can express your repentance only by leaving us alone.

Q. But why not Dominion Status? The fact is that the English understand what Dominion Status means. They don't know what is partnership, whereas Dominion Status means very nearly what you want. Why not accept it, if it is offered, as the Irish accepted the Free State status of their own accord. Does your partnership mean anything more than that?

A. Present the case to me, let me examine the contents and if I find that Dominion Status that you present is the same thing as Independence, I shall accept it at once. But I must throw the burden of proving it on those who say that Dominion Status is the same as Independence.

Young India, 12-11-1931

150. TALK AT OXFORD[1]

OXFORD,
October 24, 1931

Sir Gilbert Murray . . . seemed to be very much perturbed over what he thought were most dangerous manifestations of non-violent revolution and nationalism. "I find myself today in greater disagreement with you than even Mr. Winston Churchill", he said. Gandhiji said :

You want co-operation between nations for the salvaging of civilization. I want it too, but co-operation presupposes free nations worthy of co-operation. If I am to help in creating or restoring peace and goodwill and resist disturbances thereof I must have ability to do so and I cannot do so unless my country has come to its own. At the present moment, the very movement for freedom in India is India's contribution to peace. For so long as India is a subject nation, not only she is a danger to peace, but also England which exploits India. Other nations may tolerate today England's Imperialist policy and her exploitation of other nations, but they certainly do not appreciate it; and they would gladly help in the prevention of England becoming a greater and greater menace every day. Of course you will say that India free can become a menace herself. But let us assume that she will be-

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report : "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford : Among Future Empire-Builders". Those present at the talk included Dr. Gilbert Murray, Dr. Gilbert Slater, Prof. Reginald Coupland and Dr. Datta.

have herself with her doctrine of non-violence, if she achieves her freedom through it, and for all her bitter experience of being a victim to exploitation.

The objection about my talking in terms of revolution is largely answered by what I have already said about nationalism. But my movement is conditioned by one great and disturbing factor. You might of course say that there can be no non-violent rebellion and there has been none known to history. Well, it is my ambition to provide an instance, and it is my dream that my country may win its freedom through non-violence. And, I would like to repeat to the whole world times without number that I will not purchase my country's freedom at the cost of non-violence. My marriage with non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position. I have not mentioned truth in this connection, simply because truth cannot be expressed except by non-violence. So, if you accept the conception, my position is sound. . . .

You may be justified in saying that I must go more warily, but, if you attack the fundamentals, you have to convince me. And I must tell you that the boycott may have nothing to do with nationalism even. It may be a question of pure reform, as without being intensely nationalistic, we can refuse to purchase your cloth and make our own. A reformer cannot always afford to wait. If he does not put into force his belief he is no reformer. Either he is too hasty or too afraid or too lazy. Who is to advise him or provide him with a barometer? You can only guide yourself with a disciplined conscience, and then run all risks with the protecting armour of truth and non-violence. A reformer could not do otherwise.

Q. Would not India wait some time before she launched on the difficult task of self-government? If we send out our soldiers, we have to be responsible for their lives, and so may it not be that the sooner you get an Indian army the better? The Muslim community said last year in a united voice that they did not want responsibility at the centre. How are we to judge?

A. The long and the short of it is that you will not trust us. Well, give us the liberty to make mistakes. If we cannot handle our affairs today, who is to say when we will be able to do so? I do not want you to determine the pace. Consciously or unconsciously you adopt the role of divinity. I ask you for a moment to come down from that pedestal. Trust us to ourselves. I cannot imagine anything worse happening than is happening today, a whole humanity lying prostrate at the feet of a small nation.

And what is this talk of being responsible for the lives of your soldiers? I issue a notice to all foreigners to enlist for military service in India, and if some Britishers will come, will you prevent them? If they will enlist, we should be responsible for their lives, as any other Government whom they serve would be. The key to self-government is without doubt the control of the army.

As regards a united demand, I must say, what I have now said several times, that you cannot have a united demand from a packed Conference. It is my case that the Congress represents the largest number of Indians. The British Ministers know it. If they do not know it, I must go back to my country and have as overwhelming an opinion as possible. We had a life-and-death struggle. One of the noblest of Englishmen[1] tried us and did not find us wanting. In consequence he opened the jail gates and appealed to the Congress to go to the Round Table Conference. We had long talks and negotiations during which we exercised the greatest patience and there was a Settlement under which the Congress agreed to be represented on the Round Table Conference. The Settlement was respected by Government more in its breach than its observance, and after much hesitation I agreed to come, if only to keep my word of honour given to that Englishman. On coming here I find that I had miscalculated the forces arrayed against India and the Congress. But that does not dismay me. I must go and qualify myself and prove by suffering that the whole country wants what it asks for. Hunter has said that success on the battle-field was the shortest cut to power. Well, we worked for success on a different battle-field. I am trying to touch your heart instead of your body. If I do not succeed this time, I shall succeed next time.

Young India, 12-11-1931

[1] Lord Irwin, as Viceroy of India

151. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

OXFORD,
October 24, 1931

Q. How far would you cut India off from the Empire?

A. From the Empire entirely; from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire is an Empire only because of India. That Emperorship must go and I should love to be equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.

Q. To what extent would India be prepared to share the sorrows of England?

A. To the fullest extent.

Q. Do you think India would unite her fortunes inextricably with England?

A. Yes, so long as she remains a partner. But if she discovers that the partnership is like one between a giant and a dwarf, or if it is utilized for exploitation of the other races of the earth, she would dissolve it. The aim is the common good of all nations of the earth and, if it cannot be achieved, I have patience enough to wait for ages rather than patch up an unreal partnership.

Q. How would you distinguish exploitation from trading with a nation?

A. There are two tests : (1) The other nation must want our goods which should in no case be dumped on it against her will. (2) The trade should not be backed by the navy. And whilst in this connection I may say that, when you realize what wrong has been done by England to nations like us Indians, you will not sing *Britannia rules the waves* with any kind of pride. Things, in English Readers, which are matters for pride today, will have to be matters for shame, and you will have to cease to take any pride over the defeat or humiliation of other nations.

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report : "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford : Among Future Empire-Builders". The questions were put to Gandhiji at a meeting at the Raleigh Club.

Q. How far is the British attitude towards the communal question an obstacle in your path?

A. Largely, or I should say half and half. There has been consciously or unconsciously that policy of divide and rule working here as in India. The British officials have sometimes coquetted with one party, sometimes with another. Of course, if I were a British official, I would probably do the same and take advantage of dissensions to consolidate the rule. Our share of responsibility lies in the fact that we fall easy victims to the game.

Q. You think the British Government should suggest a solution of the communal question?

A. No. But I am the only party to say no. It is a humiliating thing and neither the Congress nor I can be party to it. But I have suggested a judicial tribunal. There are some committals on the side of Government in Government of India and Provincial Government dispatches, though all Government solutions are tinged by political considerations. As for us, each party, though talking of justice, fights shy of arbitration, which shows that there is a good deal of expediency and it is a question of degree who is wrong and who is right. The judicial tribunal can certainly be trusted to adjudicate between the various claims.

Q. Could you tell us anything about the personnel?

A. They may be non-Hindu and non-Muslim judges of the Indian High Courts or judges from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Q. Would their decision be accepted?

A. There can be no question of accepting the decision of a Court. I may confess that there is a trick at the back of the suggestion. If Government will play the game and adopt my suggestion, the whole atmosphere will change and before the judicial Committee comes into being the communities will come out with a solution. For, there is sufficient material in the advances already made to satisfy the politically-minded and each one knows the flaws in his own claim.

Young India, 12-11-1931

152. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

[On or after *October 24, 1931*][2]

Q. Why do Hindus want joint electorates?

A. Because they are foolish. They can take the wind out of the sails of Mussalmans by immediately giving them separate electorates and leaving them wondering whether there may not be after all something sinister in the separate electorates.

Q. Why are you so uncharitable to those who drink?

A. Because I am charitable to those who suffer from the effects of the curse.

Q. Do you ever suffer from nerves?[3]

A. Ask Mrs. Gandhi. She will tell you that I am on my best behaviour with the world but not with her.

Well, my husband is on his best behaviour with me.

Then I am sure that Mr. Miles has bribed you heavily.

Q. Is not the charkha a mediaeval device?

A. We were doing many things in the middle ages which were quite wise. But if most of us have given them up, why accuse me of my wisdom? However mediaeval the device may be, I am not ashamed of adding thereby fifty per cent to the income of my impoverished villagers. During the War you produced potatoes and fashionable ladies of Lyceum Club invited men to stitch sleeping-suits for the soldiers with plain needle and thread. Was it not mediaeval? Well, I learnt the mediaeval trick from the ladies of the Lyceum Club.

Q. What is the chief obstacle in the way of swaraj?

A. It is the unwillingness of the British officials to part with power; or our incapacity to wrest power from unwilling hands. Well, you feel sorry that I have not given you the ex-

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter"

[2] Desai has reported together answers given on different dates. But the first question, he says, was asked by some students at Oxford, where he was on October 24.

[3] The question was put by Mrs. Eustace Miles.

pected reply. I want you to understand that we can wrest power in spite of our disunion, and if the hands which have to yield power were willing, our disunion would soon disappear. You say the British are impartial onlookers! Well, I have had the audacity of accusing the Government of India of acting like a wedge and of accusing the British Government with having appointed a packed conference. We have our own communal solution arrived at by the Congress with enlightened Mussalmans. But, if unfortunately, some Mussalmans claiming to represent a majority are not satisfied, and because of that the Government will say that they would hold on the chains they have thrown round us, I say that we shall simultaneously strike a blow to break both the chain and the disunion.

Young India, 12-11-1931

153. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL[1]

[After *October 24, 1931*][2]

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

Many thanks for the cutting[3] which I have read. I hope you[r] effort with Dr. Ambedkar will prevail. It was a joy to me to meet Humayun at Oxford. I wish I could have seen more of him.

Yours,
M.K.G.

From a photostat : G.N. 2188-5

154. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

October 26, 1931

CHI. MANI,

I continue to get your letters. Do not stop writing because I cannot send any reply. Nowadays I have simply not the time to write letters. Today I am utilizing a few minutes snatched out of the Conference sessions.

[1] This was in reply to Mirza Ismail's undated note which read : "May I request you to glance through this cutting, especially the para I have marked. May I have it back so that I may show it to Dr. Ambedkar and a few others in corroboration of what I have been telling them."

[2] From the reference to the visit to Oxford

[3] Not available

I was delighted to learn that Dahyabhai had recovered. Convey my good wishes to him and Yashoda.

Ask Lakshmidas[1] and Manjubehn[2] to write to me. I think we shall be in England till at least one more mail steamer arrives.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, pp. 79-80

155. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

LONDON,
October 26, 1931

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I simply get no time to write letters. I am writing even this letter while attending the meeting of the Federal Committee. You ought to take some treatment for your nose. All my work here is done outside the Conference. It may not yield immediate results, but I believe it will have very good results afterwards. I have very little hope of returning with anything substantial. However, I will not return with dishonour. I have been meeting many responsible men.

The work of the Conference is likely to be over by the middle of November. I have invitations from nearly all over Europe. I am very eager to visit all those countries. I think my visiting them can do nothing but good. Meet all the people and cable to me your decisions. If you think it necessary that I should undertake the tour, you may take it that I shall be away a month longer. That is, I can reach India not earlier than in January. (Having written so far, I started dozing in the chair. As you can see, the pen refused to proceed further.) If you can spare me for so long, do so. In India you may do what you think best. You must have seen my reply[3] to Jawaharlal's cable. Irrespective of what happens here, I am convinced that, if it becomes necessary to fight the Government there on any issue, you should do so. I see no possibility of anything being done here just now concerning local issues. I had thought that something could be done about the Bengal detenus, but I got no

[1] Lakshmidas Asar
[2] Manjubehn Mashruwala
[3] *Vide* "Cable to Jawaharlal Nehru", p. 173.

opportunity to do anything. I can't say if anything can be done after the election.

I see that in Gujarat the authorities are violating the Settlement in everything they do. Fight against all their decisions. The reply that has been received concerning Ras seems to me insolent. I am confident that we shall be able to fight it out with the Government on all these issues.

I think I have written enough.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 15-6

156. LETTER TO LADY EVE CRERAR

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You will please forgive me for being so long answering your letter. The fact is that I have been overwhelmed with work, and your letter lay buried in the pile of arrears. It was rescued today, and I am now sending you the cards duly autographed.

Yours sincerely,

LADY EVE CRERAR
CLONSKEAGH
ROTHERFIELD
SUSSEX

From a photostat : S.N. 18184

157. LETTER TO EVELYN WRENCH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. The friend who writes to you has evidently missed the mark. The Congress is the Moderate Party. There is no such thing as an extreme demand. "Independence" is not an extreme demand, but it is the only self-respecting, logical and consistent demand. Moderation is in the method.

Congress eschews violence in any shape or form. There is undoubtedly a party in India which does not want independence because it fears it, but that is a constitutional disease. Those who are not suffering from that disease naturally want what their digestive apparatus craves for. Nobody would call that an extreme craving, nor expect the man with a vigorous appetite to be satisfied with one [*sic*] who has all but lost it.

The friend is again wrong when he talks about meeting English sacrifice with Indian sacrifice. I am reminded of a striking sentence of Dr. Chalmers: "Duty will be merit when debt becomes a donation." I hold that it is the duty of England to return to India what she has taken away from her. There is no sacrifice in the discharge of that obligation. But so long as Englishmen believe that, whatever measure of freedom England grants means so much sacrifice on the part of England, so long will there be no meeting ground between the two countries, because England will not be able to come up to India's credit balance against England.

I do not know whether I have made my meaning quite clear. If I have not, you will please state the difficulty and I shall endeavour to make it clear.

Yours sincerely,

EVELYN WRENCH, ESQ.
99 GOWER STREET, W.C. 1

From a photostat : S.N. 18181

158. LETTER TO A. CARLYLE WALSH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

The pamphlets[1] written by your late father have been, I see, already acknowledged. I heard of your father's love for India whilst I was in the jail last year.

Though so late in the day, I would like to convey my respectful condolence to your mother. I would also like to make

[1] One of the pamphlets written by Walter Walsh, addressee's father, was *Gandhi and Free India.*

your acquaintance if you could make time to see me—say Tuesday next, between 9 and 9.30 a.m. at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

A. CARLYLE WALSH, ESQ.
NORTHAM
ATHENAEUM ROAD
WHETSTONE, N. 20

From a photostat : S.N. 18182

159. NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL[1]

[About *October 28, 1931*][2]

This won't do. The draft refers to all other matters. What is wanted is that all matters must be under the control of a cabinet that is wholly responsible.

M.K.G.

From a photostat : G.N. 2188-4

160. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

[About *October 28, 1931*][3]

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

Your draft is defective. My own draft is with them. Here it is.

1. Complete Independence not to exclude partnership at will and on terms of absolute equality.

2. Therefore complete control of defence forces, external affairs and finance.

[1] This was written on the following note from the addressee : "The Moslems will fully associate themselves in demanding full self-government for India, subject to such transitional reservations with regard to the Army and External affairs as may be found quite necessary in the interest of India. All other matters will be under the control of a Cabinet responsible to the Legislature."

[2] The exact date is not ascertainable. It is, however, likely that this was written about the same time as the following item.

[3] The draft mentioned in the letter was followed by another which the addressee sent to Gandhiji and which the latter found "all right", *vide* "Note to Mirza Ismail", p. 241. The letter therefore must have been written before that date.

3. Resistance to any extension of special reservation or separate electorate.

I think this is all the draft contains.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 2188-2

161. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 28, 1931

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I have been receiving your letters. But I have not been able to reply to all the letters from the Ashram people and others. I get no time. I must not give you a detailed reply. You should take such medicine and such medical advice as may be necessary. You must get well quickly. Do not think much. Simply trust God in all things.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 247

162. LETTER TO SIR HENRY S. LAWRENCE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
S. W. 1,
October 28, 1931

DEAR SIR HENRY,

Many thanks for your kind letter. So far as the Congress is concerned, it is quite clear on the question of the vote for women. They must be on a par with men without any reservation. On all the other points you have mentioned, I am in agreement with you. I wish I could avail myself of the kind offer of your hospitality. But I see no chance so far as I can see at present.

From a photostat : S.N. 18197

163. SPEECH AT MONTESSORI TRAINING COLLEGE[1]

LONDON,
[October 28, 1931][2]

Madame, you have overwhelmed me with your words.[3] It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realize the presence of my Maker, Who to me embodies Truth, and in the early part of my career I discovered that if I was to realize Truth I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of Love. And having been blessed with children, I discovered that the law of Love could be best understood and learned through little children. Were it not for us, their ignorant poor parents, our children would be perfectly innocent. I believe implicitly that the child is not born mischievous in the bad sense of the term. If parents would behave themselves whilst the child is growing, before it is born and after, it is a well-known fact that the child would instinctively obey the law of Truth and the law of Love. And when I understood this lesson in the early part of my life, I began a gradual but distinct change in life.

I do not propose to describe to you the several phases through which this stormy life of mine has passed, but I can only, in truth and in perfect humility, bear witness to the fact that to the extent that I have represented Love in my life, in thought, word and deed I have realized the "peace that passeth understanding". I have baffled many of my friends when they have noticed in me peace that they have envied, and they have asked me for the cause of that priceless possession. I have not been able to explain the cause by saying that, if my friends found that peace in me, it was due to my attempt to obey this, the greatest law of our being.

It was in 1915 when I reached India, that I first became acquainted with your activities. It was in a place called Amreli that I found that there was a little school being conducted after the Montessori system. Your name had preceded that first acquaintance. I found no difficulty in finding out at once that this school

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report : "At Montessori Training College"

[2] According to Gandhiji's diary, he visited the institution on this date.

[3] Madame Montessori had welcomed Gandhiji "as a soul rather than a man".

was not carrying out the spirit of your teaching; the letter was there. But whilst there was an honest—more or less honest—effort being made, I saw too that there was a great deal of tinsel about it.

I came in touch, then, with more such schools, and the more I came in touch, the more I began to understand that the foundation was good and splendid, if the children could be taught through the laws of nature—nature, consistent with human dignity, not nature that governs the beast. I felt instinctively from the way in which the children were being taught that, whilst they were being indifferently taught, the original teaching was conceived in obedience to this fundamental law. Since then, I have had the pleasure of coming across several of your pupils, one of whom had even made a pilgrimage to Italy and had received your personal blessings. I was looking forward to meeting the children here and you all and it was a great pleasure to me to see these children. I had taken care to learn something about these little children. I had a foretaste of what I saw here, in Birmingham, where there is a school between which and this there is a difference. But I also saw that there also human nature was struggling to express itself. I see the same thing here and it was a matter of inexpressible joy to me that from their childhood the children were brought to understand the virtue of silence, and how, in response to the whisper from their teacher, the children came forward one after another in that pin-drop silence. It gave great joy to see all those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching those movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children, "Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children"? We are conducting an experiment amongst the poorest of the children in India. I do not know how far the experiment will go. We have the problem of giving real vital education to these children of India's hovels, and we have no material means.

We have to fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its own honour. And believe me from my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children—I know that they have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have.

The greatest lessons in life—if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children. Jesus never uttered a loftier or a grander truth than when he said that wisdom cometh out of the mouths of babes. I believe it, I have noticed it in my own experience that, if we would approach babes in humility and in innocence, we would learn wisdom from them.

I must not take up your time. I have simply given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me, namely, the delicate problem, considered in human terms, of drawing out the best from these millions of children of whom I have told you. But I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God and, if we have faith in that Divinity which presides over the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are endeavouring to teach those children, through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have the struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

Young India, 19-11-1931

164. *NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL*

[On or after *October 28, 1931*][1]

This draft seems all right so far as it goes. You know that it does not cover all the points. Please get the points they already have and work on them.

M.K.G.

From a photostat : G.N. 2188-3

[1] The note was written on a letter dated About October 28, 1931 from the addressee along with which he had sent a revised draft; *vide* "Letter to Mirza Ismail", pp. 236-7.

165. *INTERVIEW TO CHARLES PETRASCH AND OTHERS*[1]

LONDON,
[*October 29, 1931*][2]

Q. In your opinion, what is the method by which the Indian Princes, landowners, industrialists and bankers acquire their wealth?

A. At present by exploiting the masses.

Q. Can these people enrich themselves without exploiting the Indian workers and peasants?

A. Up to a certain point, yes.

Q. Have these people any social right to live better than the simple workers or peasants who perform the labour from which they draw their wealth?

A. No right. My social theory is that, although we are all born equal, that is to say, that we have a right to equal opportunities, nevertheless we have not all the same abilities. By the nature of things it is impossible that we should all be of an equal stature, that we should all have the same colour of skin, the same degree of intelligence; and consequently it is natural that some of us should be more fitted than others to acquire material gain. Those who are capable wish to acquire more, and they utilize their abilities to this end. If they use their abilities in the best spirit, they will be working to the benefit of the people. Those people will be 'trustees' and nothing more.

I should allow a man of intelligence to gain more and I should not hinder him from making use of his abilities. But the surplus of his gains ought to return to the people, just as the earnings of the children, whose work goes to the common family

[1] An account of the interview, originally published in *Le Monde*, 20-2-1932, was reproduced in the *Labour Monthly*. Petrasch says, he and his Indian friends "had drawn up a list of questions which we wished to put to Gandhi before his departure from London" and that they "wrote down his replies as the interview went on." Mahadev Desai reported the interview in his "London Letter", published in *Young India*, 26-11-1931. The two reports which have slight verbal variations have been collated here.

[2] Neither of the sources gives the date of the interview. But Mahadev Desai says, Sarojini Naidu's son, Baba, was among the interviewers. Gandhiji's diary has an entry under October 29, indicating the meeting with Baba and other youths.

fund. They are only the 'trustees' of their gains, and nothing else. I may be sadly disappointed in this, but that is the ideal which I uphold, and that is what is understood in the declaration of fundamental rights.

Q. Would you demand a higher reward for intellectual work?

A. In an ideal state no one can demand a higher reward for his intelligence. He who acquires more ought to use it for social ends.

We asked Gandhi if he did not believe that one of the principal causes of the poverty of the Indian peasants and workers lay in the appropriation of the fruit of their labour by the landlords and capitalists, since only a minute portion of the profits of the latter class goes to the Government. Gandhi agreed.

Q. Don't you think that the Indian peasants and workers are right in throwing themselves into a class struggle in order to secure their social and economic freedom and to rid themselves once and for all of the burden of supporting the parasite classes?

A. I myself am making the revolution for them without violence.[1]

Q. By your movement for the reduction of rents in the U.P. you may ameliorate the condition of the peasants, but you do not strike at the root of the system.

A. Yes. But you can't do everything at one and the same time.

Q. What would be your attitude in face of a revolution of the peasants and workers against the Princes, landlords, capitalists and their ally, the British Government? And also, what would be your attitude if such a revolution occurred in an independent India, in an India under a Protectorate, in an India with Dominion Status, or in an India in no matter what kind of circumstances?

A. My attitudes would be to convert the better-off classes into trustees of what they already possessed. That is to say, they would keep the money, but they would have to work for the benefit of the people who procured them their wealth. And for doing this they would receive a 'commission'.

Q. How do you count on organizing this trusteeship? By persuasion?

A. Not solely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means.[2] I have been called the greatest revolutionary of my time.

[1] The question and the answer that follow are taken from *Young India*.
[2] This sentence is from *Young India*.

That is perhaps not correct, but I do believe that I am a revolutionary, a non-violent revolutionary. My weapon is 'non-co-operation'. No one can thrive without the collaboration, willing or forced, of the people.

Q. Would you support a general strike?

A. General strike is a form of non-co-operation. It is not necessarily violent. I should take the lead of such a movement if it were peaceful and justified from all angles. Far from discouraging it I should even encourage it.

Q. Who constituted the capitalists trustees? Why are they entitled to a commission?[1]

A. They have the right to a 'commission' because the money is in their possession. No one compels them to be 'trustees'. I invite them to act as 'trustees'. I ask all owners of wealth to act as 'trustees', that is to say, not as wealth-owners by right, but as owners mandated by those whom they have exploited. I do not fix a figure for this 'commission', but I ask them only to demand what they consider they are entitled to.

For example, I shall ask the person who has a hundred rupees to keep fifty rupees and give the other fifty to the workers; but in the case of a person who has ten million rupees I shall ask him to retain, say, one per cent. So you see that my 'commission' would not be a fixed figure because that would result in grave injustice.

Q. The Maharajas and the landlords have allied themselves with the English, and you wish to make them 'trustees'. But your best followers are among the masses, who consider the Maharajas and landlords as enemies. What attitude would you take if the masses, coming to power, decided to put an end to these classes?

A. The masses at the present time do not regard the landlords and Princes as enemies. But it is necessary to make them aware of the wrong which is being done to them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as enemies, but I teach them that the latter are doing themselves harm. My followers have never told the people that the English or that General Dyer are bad, but that they are the victims of a system and that it is necessary to destroy the system and not the individual. That is why British officials can live with impunity among the people, although the latter are so inflamed by their desire for liberty

[1] This question is from *Young India*.

Q. If you wish to attack the system, there is no difference between a British capitalist and an Indian capitalist. Why, then, do you not apply your system of non-payment of taxes to those which are demanded from you by your own landed proprietors?

A. A landed proprietor is only an instrument of the system. It is not at all necessary to undertake a movement against them at the same time as against the English system. It is quite possible to distinguish between the two. We have told the people not to pay the zamindars because it is with this money that they pay the Government. But we are on good terms with the zamindars.

Q. According to Tagore, Bernard Shaw and others, the suppression of the landlords, capitalists and financiers in Russia and the establishment of the Soviets as the system of Government has led in a very short time to a considerable betterment in the social, economic and cultural conditions of the people. Now, it is to be noticed that Russia, at the time of the Revolution essentially an agricultural country, presented the same condition from a religious and cultural point of view as does India today. We should be curious to know your opinion on this matter.

A. In the first place I do not care about basing my opinions on those of others. That is why I am unable to form an appreciation of the condition of Russia. Moreover, believing—for this is what the Soviet leaders themselves say—that the Soviet system is founded on the employment of force, I have strong doubts of its final success.

Q. What is your concrete programme for giving to the peasants and workers the absolute power of deciding their own destiny?

A. My programme is a programme which I am having elaborated by the Congress. I am certain that it is resulting in the position of the peasants and workers being infinitely superior to what they have ever been able to have within human memory. I do not allude to their material condition. I mean the extraordinary awakening which affected them and their capacity for resisting injustice and exploitation.

Q. How do you propose to relieve the peasantry of their debt of five hundred crores?

A. No one knows the exact amount of debt. Such as it is, if the Congress gets the power, the Congress will undertake the scrutiny of the so-called obligations of the peasantry as it insists with regard to the obligations of the incoming Indian Government to be taken over from the outgoing alien Government.

Equally characteristic was Gandhiji's reply to the next question, asking him why he had not demanded the inclusion in the R.T.C. of a representative of the Indian States' Subjects. It would not have been consistent with the dignity of the Congress to demand the inclusion of anybody in a Conference in the making of which it had no power. He explained:

I could not plead on behalf of the Congress and the Congress, being an erstwhile rebel against the Government, could not consistently entreat for the inclusion of anybody in the Conference.

Q. What do you mean by 'machine'? Is not the charkha a machine? Is it that exploitation is not inherent in certain kinds of machines? or do you think it is the manner of using machines which makes them an instrument of exploitation?

A. The charkha and similar instruments are clearly machines, and from this you can gather my definition of machines. I am willing to admit that it is largely the abuse of the machine system which is responsible for the exploitation of the working class in the world.

Q. You speak of stopping the exploitation of the masses, which implies the abolition of capitalism. Do you intend to suppress capitalism, and if so are you ready to deprive the capitalist of his surplus wealth so as to prevent him from restarting a new capitalism?

A. If I come to power, I shall certainly abolish capitalism but I shall not abolish capital, and it follows that I shall not abolish the capitalists. I am convinced that the co-ordination of capital and labour is perfectly possible. I have seen it realized with success in certain cases and what is true in one case can become true for all. I do not consider capital in itself as an evil, no more than I consider the machine system in itself as an evil.

We then went on to speak about religious matters and we asked Gandhi if he thought that there existed a Hindu-Muslim problem. His reply was definitely in the affirmative. We then asked him if this problem was of major importance for the masses, and in that case if he thought that it could be remedied by the application of political measures, or by a compromise.

A. I do not think this problem exists among the masses, or at least, not to a very great degree. It is not possible to solve it by political measures, but it can be done by a compromise, for compromise is the essence of life, inasmuch as it does not touch the roots of the principles of life.

Q. In a federal India, with the Princes as autonomous rulers, if the subjects demanded the same elementary political rights as the people of British

India and had recourse to civil disobedience, with a popular uprising to enforce their demands, would the federal forces be called to help the Princes in suppressing the uprising? And what would your attitude be in that case?

A. If I had the power I should never use it, or allow it to be used, for suppressing civil disobedience, no matter how or where it arose, for I hold civil disobedience to be a permanent law of our being entirely replacing violence, which is the law of the beast.

Q. Is it true that you withdrew your support from those popular movements which arose in the native states, movements with the object of demanding from the Princes the same right which you demand from the British in British India?

Gandhi looked at us in surprise and gave the lie to this report.

We asked him what, in his opinion, was the difference between "independence" and "equality of collaboration in Empire matters".

A. There is, and there is not, a difference between the two. That is to say, two independent states in an Empire can perfectly well be partners, collaborating in an imperial association. But obviously India is not in such a situation. Consequently, an association of India with Britain in the same Empire is a state, or rather a condition, which cannot be likened to independence, for a comparison can only take place between two things of the same kind. In this case the things are not of the same kind. Hence, if there is to be an association, on an equal footing, between Britain and India, the Empire must cease to exist.

At this, we retorted that the Lahore Congress made no mention of an association of equality within the limits of the Empire.

Gandhi replied that it was no use mentioning this in the Congress, but the question had been touched upon in the speeches.

Q. Does this equality of association envisage the withdrawal of the Viceroy?

A. The idea of "empire" must disappear entirely. But it is impossible for me to say definitely whether the idea of royalty must also be abolished. I am quite unable to say at present that the king of Great Britain will cease to be the king of India.

Q. Are you taking account of the fact that, since the time of the Lahore Congress, when the declaration of Independence displaced the compromise resolution adopted at Calcutta, the youth of India has believed that it was fighting for an independent India, in which there would no longer be a king? Is it not bad politics to tell the youth of India now that royalty will remain?

Gandhi, quite unruffled, replied that there was no question of bad faith. If the question had been put to him at Karachi, he would have given the same reply.

Q. Well, then, what difference is there between you and Malaviya, who was in opposition at the Lahore Congress?

A. The difference is this, that Malaviya still wished to give the Empire a chance, whereas I did not.

Q. Do you regard King George and his predecessors as usurpers in India?

A. I own that Great Britain and King George are usurpers of India.

We then asked him whether he thought it possible that a country which fought against exploitation could remain part of an Empire based on the exploitation of weaker races.

A. It is impossible, I would lend my heartiest support to the abolition of the British system of government, as well as to the abolition of the capitalist system, but not to the abolition of capital and capitalists. If the British Empire does not stop exploiting the weaker races, we shall refuse to collaborate with it. Imperialist exploitation must disappear; collaboration will have to be free, and India at liberty, if she pleases, to sever the association.

Q. What were the reasons which led you to conclude a truce with Lord Irwin? Was it because, as we have been told, the Congress movement was only fighting on one wing, and if a truce were not arranged, it would be in grave danger of being strangled? And does that mean that you and the Congress were afraid that you would be crushed by the violence of the British Government? Would it not have been preferable, for the principle of "non-violence", that those of you who believe in the principle, should continue the fight and refuse to surrender to the violence of the British Government? Even if the movement thereby suffered a set-back, the reverse itself would have been its victory.

A. The suggestion of the impending collapse of our movement is entirely false. The movement was showing no signs of slackening. It is possible, and even probable, that in certain cases, it may have wavered, but I did not know of it, since I was in prison. But it would be going absolutely against the rules of satyagraha (non-co-operation) to come to an agreement at the moment when the satyagrahis (followers of non-co-operation) were showing any lukewarmness. It is at that moment that they refuse to come to an agreement. I had no fear whatever that the movement was weakening nor was such a thought in my head when I put forward the idea of a truce. The idea of a truce was accepted on

its own merits and it is contrary to the principles of satyagraha not to come to an agreement when suitable terms are offered.

Your opinion would have been right had it been through fear of suffering that we accepted the truce, but a satyagrahi would betray his ideal if he exposed his companions without reason to suffering. You would be perfectly right if we had accepted the truce from base or selfish motives.

Labour Monthly, March 1932, and *Young India*, 26-11-1931

166. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
October 30, 1931

I am grieved to hear of the attacks made on the lives of Mr. Villiers[1] and Mr. Durno[2]. Ours is a difficult task and is rendered still more difficult by these senseless attacks. I am convinced that these attacks do no good, but do create harm by increasing the vindictive spirit on both sides. I know that I shall be reminded of such continuing provocations as the wicked barbarities in Chittagong, which have moved to indignation even the poet Rabindranath Tagore, and the wanton firing in the Detenus camp at Hijli.

My point, however, is that you must preserve the spirit of non-violence in spite of the greatest provocation. Our success lies through non-violence.

How I wish impatient young men would help the Congress programme, and thus hasten the day of deliverence, which consummation, I know, is as dear to them as to the Congress.

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-10-1931

[1] E. Villiers, President of the European Association, Calcutta, was shot at in his office on October 29. He received minor injuries.

[2] District Magistrate of Dacca

167. SPEECH AT MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA LEAGUE[1]

LONDON,
October 30, 1931

He said there was a great deal of ignorance among the English people as to the real state of affairs in India. There was also false knowledge spread about the history of India. He contended that most of the works that the British people read on Indian history were, in his opinion, one-sided. For instance, he pointed out the "Black Hole" of Calcutta. It had now been found that it was largely a matter of imagination. There was no such thing as the "Black Hole". It had been found by Indian historians and other impartial writers that physically it was impossible to keep so many in that room.

I can give many instances from modern history, and later researches have shown as mere fables many things which at one time were supposed to be gospel truths. It was therefore the duty of institutions like the Commonwealth League to acquire true knowledge about India with reference to the past as well as the present.

There is also, I see, a conspiracy of silence with reference to the events happening in India. Barbarities, or, I may say, atrocities have been committed in Chittagong. Chittagong is a most important port and town in Bengal. It has a large population and there were, as there are today, large commercial interests. An officer was assassinated by a Bengali youth of about 16 years. By way of reprisal, shops were looted and atrocities were committed which aroused even men like the Poet Tagore to indignation.

Many of you may be aware that as a rule that ailing, infirm man never comes out into the public, but spends his time amidst books and dreams, conducting a unique college and school at Santiniketan, experimenting with so many things. He can ill afford to go out, but he could not possibly rest himself on this occasion.

After Chittagong, we have the incident at Hijli, where are kept what are called detenus. Now, you may not know what is meant by a detenu. I shall tell you immediately. A detenu is a

[1] The meeting was held at the Central Hall, Westminster, with J. F. Horrabin in the chair.

person kept in prison without a trial. He does not even know what the charges against him are. Simply on suspicion of being a terrorist or belonging to a terrorist organization, he is detained, and detained indefinitely. In no sense is he an ordinary prisoner.

These Hijli detenus are supposed not to have behaved quite according to the proper standard—the standard of the guards on duty. I am giving you simply the newspaper reports or a bare summary of the evidence of the report of a recent inquiry. For their misbehaviour, these men were shot, two died and several others were injured.

About the Hijli atrocities the Poet is indignant. I have mentioned to you only the Poet's name because he is a well-known figure. Besides him, many people of name and fame have attended meetings convened to condemn these wanton atrocities.

But here in this country, you do not know what things are happening in India and how they stir the people.

You are simply told by the British Press that the detenus are bad fellows. They are people who deserve what Government, in the name of law and order, are giving them.

Now I shall speak to you about the attacks on the lives of Mr. Villiers and Mr. Durno. They are deplorable and, from my standpoint, disgraceful and most embarrassing to what I represent. However, I cannot understand why so much is made of these incidents. I should ask and tell you frankly that to you, the British public, other incidents such as Chittagong and Hijli should also be made much of.

You cannot ignore the fact that there is repression on the part of the Indian Government, and as a result there is terrorism on the part of those who have run amok, who have lost what I may call their balance. They are out for vengeance and are determined to take some lives.

Now, no one can claim more than I do that I most severely rule out what they do. I hate violence, particularly when it is committed by my own people. It interrupts my experiment. It distrusts my mission of non-violence, which I have been making for the last so many years.

Although these young men do not belong to the Congress or accept its programme, yet a situation of such a character makes matters worse for me. This shows that the Congress is not able to exercise sufficient influence on these people to prevent them from doing mad things.

Things such as have happened in Chittagong and Hijli would give rise to open, widespread rebellion in any other country, but

in my country things do not move so swiftly as that, for two reasons.

Believe me, I sincerely think my people are too paralysed to offer resistance to violence and, for the last ten years the gospel of non-violence which I have been preaching has become a disturbing factor to them. Non-violence has given rise to a great awakening of the people; that is, in spite of these grave provocations, the newspapers and the Press here do not care to take notice of the real situation. They ought to do what Russell did at the time of the Crimean War.[1] Unfortunately, we have no Russell today who will give the English public a true state of affairs, nor have the newspapers a desire to give the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They are persisting in giving an incomplete account, a wholly incorrect picture, suited to their interests.

The Viceroy has passed one more Ordinance. Do you know what is an Ordinance? An Ordinance is passed over the head of the Legislature by the Viceroy in exercise of his special jurisdictionary power. This Ordinance gives the widest powers to the police to arrest people without trial and detain them. This is done as if the powers already enjoyed were not enough. I personally think that these fresh powers are not necessary, but the Indian Government, shall I say, goes mad when this kind of terrorism takes place. This is not known as reprisal but as repression. This has commenced now and will continue for long. In spite of the repression, the terrorists have become active, fearless and, I might say, foolhardy. They dare do anything. They have sacrificed life in advance. They think their lives in the service of the country are not worth the purchase.

The only way of preventing Chittagong and Hijli is to let India manage her own affairs. Let India mismanage her affairs, as you have a right to manage or mismanage your own affairs. You have recently done it. You hopelessly mismanaged affairs. You place right men in wrong places, wrong men in right places. It is a game of seesaw. Commit mistakes and you can correct them by experience. It is a fine game (Loud laughter). Human nature is like that. But what is the situation in India? We cannot manage our own affairs. Today India is one vast prison-house. We are prisoners. You Englishmen and Englishwomen are our jailors. You have to realize your responsibility, that just as we have

[1] Sir William Howard Russell in his report to *The Times* from Crimea, exposed mismanagement of the Crimean War and inspired the work of Florence Nightingale.

to render an account of ourselves, you as jailors will also have to render an account of yourselves.

So what does it show? It shows our unnatural relationship. I must tell you that this unnatural relationship must be ended soon. We Indians have to do nothing but to attain our freedom. God willing, we shall take our freedom from unwilling hands. These few days of grace, brought about by that noble Englishman, may soon be over. He thought we had drunk enough of the cup of suffering and brought us out of the prison walls. He negotiated with us, as a result of which there was a settlement, which made it possible for the Congress to be represented at the Round Table Conference.

It would have been wrong of me as a satyagrahi not to accept his offer.

Now I am telling you some home truths. It is better, really better, to end this thing that exists in India. But let me tell you that it is not your fault. It is the result of my limitations. We have not suffered enough. I shall be content to go away to India to invite my countrymen to go through the fiery ordeal once again.

For me Chittagong and Hijli are beacon lights. They are pointers, inviting me to hurry to India. But I shall not leave the Conference abruptly in anger.

That does not mean that I never become angry. But God has given me sufficient strength to suppress that anger. In any case, anger or no anger, I am not going to leave these shores because of these things. I shall wait, watch, pray and plead, but I keep in reserve for myself that, if the Round Table Conference fails and does not give what the Congress demands, what the Congress is entitled to have, I shall do what we did not a long time back.

I am hoping that we shall not be found wanting in that in the time to come. It will be your turn then to wake up England.

Therefore try to understand from now what the Congress means, what Chittagong means, what Hijli means.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-11-1931

168. *CABLE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

October 31, 1931

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI
BARDOLI (INDIA)

BENGAL REPRESSION[1] OTHER THINGS DISTURB ME. REALIZE HELPLESSNESS HERE. NEVERTHELESS REGARD PRESENCE HERE NECESSARY AND THEREAFTER TRAVELLING CONTINENT. THIS MAY MEAN INABILITY REACH HOME BEFORE MIDDLE JANUARY. SEND CONSIDERED OPINION.[2]

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 18211

[1] The repression (*vide* the preceding item) had been launched under the Bengal Criminal Law Ordinance No. 9, 1931, as amended to give greater power to the Bengal Government.

[2] Referring to this Vallabhbhai Patel later cabled: "Working Committee considered your cable. On facts available here feel that your further continuing Conference unnecessary and liable be misunderstood but in view your definite opinion that presence necessary apparently based on facts circumstances better known to you Committee leaves final decision to you. Situation here growing more critical. Government attitude generally much worse. Conditions Bengal worsening. Frontier Province repression increasing. All activities in some places there being stopped. United Provinces early non-payment campaign seems inevitable. Withdrawal from Bardoli inquiry may soon become necessary owing most unsatisfactory procedure and other reasons. Early return desirable. Long Continental tour would have prejudicial effect."

169. CABLE TO SAILENDRA NATH GHOSE[1]

October 31, 1931

GHOSE
31 UNION SQUARE
NEW YORK

YOUR CABLE. REGRET UNABLE VISIT AMERICA. HAVE EXPLAINED FULLY MRS. GHOSE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18209

170. SPEECH AT FRIENDS' HOUSE[2]

LONDON,
October 31, 1931

1. I should shortly say it[3] is intended to bear the dictionary meaning, but in the Congress mandate it is said it does not exclude termination of partnership at will by either party; in order not to create any confusion and not to be uncertain, mandate mentions that. It includes the three controls, subject to such adjustment as are absolutely necessary in the interest of India. A nation which has been a subject nation and another which has been an exploiting nation cannot easily become partners. But for the fact that our struggle is non-violent, independence and partnership are incompatible and complete severance would have been necessary.

2. Canada is not considered to be in partnership with Great Britain. It is a daughter State. They represent the same civilization—same mode of life—of course all humanity meets in the end, otherwise ours is a distinct civilization. Independence was men-

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's cable of 30-10-1931 saying: "Thanks letter wife. Burdwan arrived launching vigorous anti-Gandhi campaign supported interested parties with practical appreciation importance American opinion. If my God same God guiding you then search inner conscience and realize with me way clear your visit. . ." S.N. 18208.

[2] Mahadev Desai also reported briefly this meeting with the Quakers in his "London Letter", published in *Young India*, 19-11-1931.

[3] "Partnership"

tioned so that there may be no idea lingering in our mind of a subject nation. Then it is used to distinguish Dominion Status. I was for it once, but when lawyers contended against me and said it was a higher status, I said to myself that I was certainly for no lower status. I said if Dominion Status is lower, I was for independence.

3. Separate not from British Commonwealth—if India means to be independent in reality it must be complete severance from the Empire. It is an Empire because there are Princes, vassal States. Great Britain should cease to subjugate all these Princes. It means extinction of the Empire and the Empire spirit. I should not associate with any nation which believed in exploitation and sustained its commerce by force. A tremendous principle is at stake. We are eager not only to get rid of exploitation but to prevent India from becoming a highly industrialized nation and becoming a menace to the world. We want the masses to feel that they do not want any dominion on any nation or any groups of individuals even. There should be vital equality between nations, and even if it took years to make this idea mature, we would wander in the wilderness to get them. This is no verbal jugglery, but a fundamental yearning of human nature.

Q. For some years Britain would continue certain subject territories like Gold Coast. Would Mr. Gandhi object?

A. I would certainly object. India would certainly aspire after influencing British policy. Supposing there came a cry from West Coast or Swaziland, India would feel that it was a partner . . .[1] I do not want India to be an engine of oppression. I am dreaming of a time when India would be a check on aggrandizement by other nations. But I should not immediately sever the connection, though I know that Zulus, Swazis are being corrupted and exploited. It is a policy which is radically wrong. To be able to call these dominions should be no matter for pride. There is no use your saying that, whilst they were Crown Colonies, you do for them everything, and when they become responsible, you would do nothing.

Q. Partnership means economic alliance or does it presuppose a common British Crown?

A. That question has been agitating me. There is a Crown, but how far I should be linked with the Crown I do not know. I should argue it out with friends. It is a solid and good question as

[1] A few words here are not clear.

to what connection India would have with the Crown. How the Council would be defined is more a matter of phraseology than of moral difficulty.

Q. Termination of partnership like termination of alliances between nations—on what terms?

A. If it is not profitable for Britain, it must retire. I would wish it to be in perpetuity. Common relations would be contractual relations. For constitutional partnership I have not fixed any terms. It does involve giving of a notice for dissolution.

4. I have agreed yet to no safeguards. When I have been cornered, I have said safeguards for such I.C.S. members as you will keep, such military officers as you keep. For we want to go before the world as a solvent nation. We should be sure of what we take over. . . . [1] I have been cruelly misrepresented as repudiating liabilities. A lurid picture of widows being ruined who had taken loans, etc., was cruelly untruthful. That party could not be harmed in any shape or form. Great Britain's honour, prestige and everything is concerned as partner in all these liabilities. All that happens in a commercial business should happen between Britain and India also. We should satisfy creditors that the liabilities we take over should be discharged. There is a third safeguard—existing interests of Europeans in India. . . .[2] Every legitimate interest will be legally and lawfully protected. There is no desire for racial discrimination. We have been fighting it in South Africa and elsewhere. But it is one thing and guarding the nation against ruinous competition is another thing. There is a Swedish match factory combine which has descended upon India as a blight and threatens ruin of match factories. They have secured handsome terms from Government. They have acquired fine land and have even penetrated the Andamans. I do not object to this because it is a Swedish combine. I should have objected to it if it was an Indian combine. Under the partnership there would be a favoured-nation clause, without being charged with racial discrimination.

5. The adjustment would be adjustment naturally due between outgoing and incoming firms. . . .[3] If Britain wants to do the thing it must do it decently. Safeguards do not in any way derogate from complete independence.

HORACE ALEXANDER: Schuster suggested assurance of establishment of a Reserve Bank and raising a new internal loan.

[1] A few words here are not clear.

[2] & [3] Some portions here are not clear.

6. GANDHIJI : We would have to do it. We want the Reserve Bank ourselves, but there are no reserves to fall back upon. No gold reserve. I have given you an inkling. Partnership at will. Period I do not know.

7. No one came by right of election — none by invitation. If the Prime Minister wanted to bar my entry he could do so. An M.P. cannot be put out. No procedure is necessary to put one out. It is an embarrassing position. I have come as a guest of the nation and must walk warily and I cannot tell you how warily I am walking. . . .[1] I have a tremendous moral problem before me. I have an invitation to attend the King's party. I am feeling so heart-sick and sore upon happenings in India that I should not like to go. If I had come as an elected representative, I should have had no hesitation. Here is the function which is social [but] has a political nature, but I am doing nothing hastily. I put myself in touch with Whitehall. I am a man who every moment considers the morality of the things not its legality.

The Conference is packed. The other representatives have been chosen by the Viceroy. His conception was faulty. The selection was his and it was not possible for him to come to an unerring judgment. I can demonstrate to you how wicked some of these things have been, how much wire-pulling has been done. We would certainly have captured the Mahasabha. I would have been the only elected representative of the untouchables. I would be selling their birthright if I lent myself to this vile scheme of separate representation. Moonje is a friend of mine, but he is a reactionary. Would Congress have allowed the Native States' subjects' rights to be sold away? It is a diabolical thing for them to say that they represent their own people also. It is a fatal flaw in the formation of the Conference that Princes should come here in a double capacity. There is a States' People's Conference and it is held back under my iron rule. I have been holding them back and though they are men of great status and ability. I have asked them to be satisfied with their present position. But this shows to you that it is wholly unrepresentative. Today the communalists occupy the front pages of newspapers. I would at once say to Mussalmans and Sikhs: take what you can. It is today the dream of a visionary. Therefore, I have suggested three things: (1) I have put before the R.T.C. the Congress Scheme framed by a Committee of Hindus, Mussalmans and Sikhs. They

[1] A few words here are not clear.

met all leading Mussalmans and leading Sikhs. (2) Otherwise private arbitration. (3) Failing that, a judicial tribunal. The fourth thing is one with which I cannot associate myself, viz., asking Government to suggest a solution. It would be selling the country. For no Government in the nature of things would suggest a solution unfavourable to themselves. The utmost I said that could be done is to go to British Courts of Law, Non-Hindu, Non-Muslim Judges or Members of Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. These are concerete alternative proposals. If Government cannot summon courage, it is doomed to failure. Government put themselves into a tight corner by suggesting that nothing can be done without settlement. What has Defence to do with communal settlement? No favoured minorities but pampered minorities. Congress foolishly lent itself to a communal settlement and it cannot be easily undone. How can I go out of an express train and jump into an aeroplane? I shall only be falling to my destruction.[1] . . .

I have given you an outline of what is agitating me. You may think the Congress incapable of bargaining away any minorities' rights to win swaraj. The Congress considers it bad for Mussalmans, Sikhs, Hindus and bad for the nation to give them separate electorates. But it is worst for untouchables. Untouchables are above this. For me who feels with them and knows their life, it is equal to killing them if separate electorates are given them. They are in the hands of superior classes. They can suppress them completely and wreak vengeance upon the untouchables who are at their mercy.

I may be opening out my shame to you. But, in the existing circumstances, how can I invite utter destruction for them? I would not be guilty of that crime. Dr. Ambedkar, able as he is, has unhappily lost his head over this question. He sees blood wherever Hinduism is. If he was a real representative, I should have withdrawn. Today he cannot coherently think of the problem. I repudiate his claim to represent them. I am the representative of the depressed classes. Get a mandate and I may not [*sic*] be elected but Ambedkar cannot be returned. The Congress Scheme covers the interest of minorities completely. One line or clause I would insert—Judicial Tribunal. I said I proposed this clause and I would see that it was carried.

I must take the other end. I should resist separate representation for Europeans on other grounds. They are the ruling race,

[1] A few words that follow are not clear.

they were able to shadow an Indian Governor and make his life a hell. Sinha's Secretariat shadowed him. His very servants were acting as his spies. He died of a broken heart. I had seen him at the height of his power. I saw him when he was utterly broken. I said smilingly to Sir Hubert Carr, "why not come to us for votes? You may be sure that a man like Mr. Andrews would always be returned by an Indian electorate."[1] Carr said Andrews would not be a fit representative of Englishmen, Mr. Andrews no more represents the English mind than an Indian does. "Well, if the Englishman must stay there, he must represent the Indian mind. Lord Salisbury's black man Dadabhai Naoroji was elected by the suffrage of Central Finsbury."

Then Anglo-Indians. I know them much better than Col. Gidney does. I have seen them weep before me. They come to me and say, "We are bastards. Englishmen do not recognize us; Indians would not adopt us." I say, "Come to us, discard your tinsel and we will adopt you." I saw a fat man—an Anglo-Indian—he could not bear the idea that his mother was an Indian woman. They would be pariahs and untouchables with a separate electorate under National Government. Sir Henry Gidney may be all right but others won't be knighted. But if they would come and claim the suffrage of our people they are quite welcome—Kumarappa—Joseph Kumarappa[2]—can turn Gujarat round his fingers by dint of service.

HORACE ALEXANDER: You would have constituted the Conference by election. Just how tell us?

G. An orientation should have been defined. There are telegrams from Jains — also Lingayats. If you are to humour these so-called manufactured orientation, how can you do so?

The Congress Scheme recognizes (1) Weightage; (2) Sind [as a] separate province if it can be economically sustained; (3) Joint electorates and adult suffrage; (4) Reservations for minorities and weightage; (5) Guarantees-cum-rights and civic liberties for all communities;

Q. Is it not a fact that the majority of Mussalmans [do not] consent to have responsibility in Centre if the majority question cannot be settled?

A. I say whether they attend or not, the Conference must finish deliberations. If British Government wants to part with

[1] This sentence is from *Young India.*
[2] Dr. J. C. Kumarappa

power, its progress must not be allowed to be blocked by even the Congress. If a proper scheme is prepared, what is the meaning of a party resisting the thing? After all, the Congress represents Mussalmans also. Judicial tribunal composed of Parsis, Christians or all of them but not of Hindus or Muslims. It is foolish, tantalizing, humiliating—this playing a waiting game.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND: Would a formula in Act of Parliament, indicating wish of the people of India to be separated, or not separated, do?

A. Yes; but the partnership must be a strong bond and not subject to be torn to pieces by disruptive forces.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

171. LETTER TO REGINALD REYNOLDS[1]

[*October/November, 1931*]

MY DEAR REGINALD,

Just a line in reply to your question whilst I am sitting at the Conference. I favour preference to Lancashire to help a partner nation in its distress, assuming of course that partnership was possible. Why should Japan complain that I prefer a partner in distress? If India becomes partner instead of remaining subject, there is no Empire. You must relate all my acts to ahimsa. In ahimsa there is no room for immoral expedience.

Of course must meet before I leave.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 4541. Courtesy: Swarthmore College, Philadelphia

[1] The addressee, in *To Live in Mankind*, says: "It was a reply to another critical query relating to policy justifying economic concessions which I had wrongly attributed to lack of firmness on his part. His letter made it clear that he did not offer these concessions from weakness, but out of sympathy for the British people, of whose economic problems he had learnt a good deal. He had been especially interested in the conditions of the Lancashire textile workers."

172. SPEECH AT PEMBROKE COLLEGE[1]

CAMBRIDGE,
[*November 1, 1931*][2]

The partnership has to be on equal terms. It should not be 'subjection' in glorified language. That means that the present relationship must be completely transformed though the connection may be retained, and that connection should be wholly and solely for the benefit of mankind. India by herself has no capacity to exploit the nations of the earth, but with Great Britain's assistance she can do it. Now the partnership must mean that exploitation shall cease, and, if Great Britain should not desist from it, India should sever the connection. All that is wanted is a fundamental change in the British policy of exploitation. Britain cannot thereafter boast that she has a strong navy guarding the maritime highways and all her overseas commerce.

What about the South African possession? I would not insist on a transformation of Britain's relations with them, as a condition precedent to our partnership. But I should certainly strive to work for the deliverance of those South African races which, I can say from experience, are ground down under exploitation. Our deliverance must mean their deliverance. But, if that cannot come about, I should have no interest in a partnership with Britain, even if it were of benefit to India. Speaking for myself, I would say that a partnership, giving the promise of a world set free from exploitation, would be a proud privilege for my nation and I would maintain it for ever. But India cannot reconcile herself in any shape or form to any policy of exploitation and, speaking for myself, I may say that, if ever the Congress should adopt an imperial policy, I should sever my connection with the Congress.

But would not the Congress be satisfied with a status equal to South Africa or Canada, for the time being at any rate? I see

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". According to Desai this is a condensation of the talk which lasted several hours. Present at the meeting were Ellis Barker, Lowes Dickinson, Dr. John Murray, Dr. Baker and Evelyn Wrench.

[2] The date is according to Gandhiji's diary, which also says that the meeting was held in the morning.

the danger of saying 'yes'. If you visualize a higher or superior status towards which we have then to work, I should say 'no'. But if it is a status beyond which we have not to aspire, I should say 'yes'. It should be a status which the ordinary man in the street should understand to be a radically different status from the present. I would, therefore, not accept a transition period during which we may have to be satisfied with a lower status. The Congress will not be satisfied with a state lower than the best.

But what about the Princes? They do not want independence. I know they don't, and they cannot, as they are the mouthpiece of the British Government. But there are others too who think that they cannot live except under the protection of British arms. For me, I cannot accept anything short of a complete control of the army. If all other leaders of the land were to accept a compromise on the army question, I would say I would rather stay out, but would not resist it and make a call to the people to suffer. If there were such a large step taken which would ultimately and quickly lead to the final thing, I would tolerate it, though I would not endorse it.

But, if you say the British units will never serve under the national Government, it would mean to me a fatal objection to any connection with Great Britain. We do not want, we cannot possibly tolerate, an army of occupation. No scheme of Indianization can serve any useful purpose inasmuch as, until the last moment, the command will be British, and the same doubts about our capacity to take over charge will be expressed as are expressed today. The real responsible Government can come when Britishers begin to trust India and her ability. Chaos can be got over only when Britain has a living conviction that it has done wrong to India and should now, by way of undoing the wrong, keep British troops at the disposal of Indian ministers. You are afraid that British soldiers may be cut to pieces under the foolish orders of Indian ministers. Well, I ask you not to forget that, during the Boer War, there came a time when British generals were described in England as asses and British soldiers as heroes. If British generals erred, Indian ministers too may err. The Indian ministers would certainly discuss everything with the Commander-in-Chief and other military experts, but the final authority and responsibility will certainly have to be the ministers'. Let the Commander-in-Chief then resign or obey.

The idea of my paying for freedom by blood startles you. Well, I, who claim to know the conditions of India through and through, know that India is dying by inches. The land revenue

exactions mean morsels forcibly taken out of the mouths of the peasants' children. It is an indescribable agony through which the peasant is passing. In order to put that condition right, a transition stage is not the remedy. Do the British Government understand transition as I mean it? Would they keep the British soldiers to help us, i.e., only in our interests? If so, we would have them and pay them according to our means. But, if the position honestly held is that we are incapable, and the control should not be relaxed, then, if God wills it, we must go through the purgatory. I have not talked of rivers of other people's blood flowing, for I know that the party of violence is dying out. But I have talked of Gangesful of our own blood—a pure voluntary act of self-immolation to face the situation. It would be good for India to go through that purgatory if it must. Personally, I do not think there can be such communal riots as you fear. Ninety per cent of the population of India is rural and the strife is confined only to the ten per cent urban population. I would count that bloodshed as of no consequence beside this slow ignominious death which carries no glory with it. This, of course, assumes that India is being starved to death by having to pay the phenomenal expenditure for a foreign army of occupation and the most expensive civil service in the world. Even Japan, which is armed to the teeth, does not pay for her army to the extent that we have to do.

My quarrel with you is this. I know that every honest Englishman wants to see India free, but is it not tragic for them to feel that the moment British arms are removed there would be invasions and internecine strife? Well, as against that, my contention is that it is the British presence that is the cause of internal chaos, because you have ruled India according to the principle of divide and rule. Because of your benevolent intentions you feel that the harrow does not hurt the toad. In the nature of things, it cannot but hurt. It is not that you are in India in response to our invitation. You must realize that there is sullen discontent everywhere and everyone says, "We do not want foreign rule." And why this over-anxiety about how we would fare without you? Go to the pre-British period. History does not record a larger number of Hindu-Muslim riots. In fact, the history of my own times shows a darker record. The fact is that the British arms are powerless to prevent riots, though they are powerful enough to punish the guilty and the innocent. We hear of no riots in the reign of even Aurangzeb. As for the invasions, the worst invasion left the villages untouched. There were

periodic visitations of the plague. If to avoid that kind of plague, which after all may be a cleansing process, we should have to maintain an army of doctors and starve ourselves to pay for them, we would far rather have the cleansing process. Take the occasional inroads of tigers and lions. Would we submit to the erection of castles and fortresses at the expense of millions of rupees rather than fight the beasts straight and take the risks? Pardon me, we are not such a nation of absolute cowards who would always run away from risk. Better that we were wiped off the face of the earth than remain alive sustained by foreign bayonets. No, you must trust us to know how to patch up our quarrels and to deal with invasions. India, which has survived many invasions, and showed a culture and a civilization unsurpassed by any on earth, need not be pitied and kept in cotton-wool.

Young India, 19-11-1931

173. SPEECH AT INDIAN MAJLIS

CAMBRIDGE,
November 1, 1931

The attitude of the delegates to the Round Table Conference was not representative of the attitude of the people of India. If the Round Table Conference failed, civil resistance would certainly be revived in India. It would not occur immediately. Civil resistance was a movement under control and would be revived only after the Congress had formally decided to do so after due consideration.

So said Mr. Gandhi speaking at a meeting of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge.

Mr. Gandhi recalled that he addressed the Majlis in 1908[1].

In reply to a question, Mr. Gandhi said that his solution was the Congress solution, but as that was unacceptable to the Muslims, he proposed either private arbitration or arbitration by a judicial tribunal. If those two alternatives were not accepted, only time could produce a settlement.

Failure to effect a settlement of the Punjab question arose from common distrust among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. He warned the hearers against exaggerating the importance of the Punjab question.[2]

Don't think that paralysis has possessed the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh masses in India. Had it been the case, I should not

[1] This seems to be an error for 1909, when Gandhiji visited Britain as member of a deputation.

[2] What follows has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" published in *Young India*.

have been here to represent the biggest organization in India. But the stupidity is confined to the present company. Present company meaning not this House, but the Indian delegates in the Round Table Conference, including, of course, myself.

Q. Why does not the unemployed rural population go to the towns and join some industry?

A. Even the Royal Commission on Agriculture did not suggest this remedy.

Q. Could you please tell us how an Englishman going to India can co-operate with Indians and serve India?

A. Well, the first thing he should do is to see Charlie Andrews and ask him what he did and what he has gone through to serve India. He has dedicated every minute of his life to the service of India, and done the work of several thousand Englishmen. Let the Englishman, therefore, have his first lessons from him. Then, he must go, not with a view to teach, but to learn how to serve India, and if he approaches his task in that spirit, he will certainly teach. But, in doing so, he will efface himself and merge himself with the Indians, as for instance, Mr. Stokes has done in Simla Hills. Let them all identify themselves, with the Indians, and try to help them. What cannot real love do? Let all those who are fired with love for India certainly go to India. They are needed there.

The Hindu, 2-11-1931, and *Young India*, 19-11-1931

174. STATEMENT AT THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE[1]

LONDON,
November 2, 1931

Being silent I would like to express my dissent in writing from the draft report in the following among other matters.

I adhere to the view that one chamber would be the best for the purpose intended to be served. But, subject to certain vital modifications, I would be prepared to support Sir Mirza Ismail's proposal if the body contemplated by him becomes an advisory body.

[1] The Committee had concluded consideration of paragraphs 1-51 of its Third Report which were adopted with a few alterations. Since this was Gandhiji's day of silence, he made the statement in writing which was read out by Lord Sankey.

The Congress is wholly opposed to the special representation of the interests of landlords, European and Indian commerce and labour. Representatives of these interests should appeal to the common electorate for their election.

The Congress is similarly opposed to the nomination of members. But specialists should have facility given to them to address the chamber on required occasions.

There is much I would like to say with reference to the paragraphs about the States, especially on the matter of the representation of the subjects of the States. But I reserve my opinion for the time being.

I adhere to the proposal I had the privilege of making on indirect election or, rather, election through delegates using the villages as units. This scheme is based on adult suffrage to which the Congress is pledged.

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 334

175. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

LONDON,
November 3, 1931

Gandhiji's programme depends entirely on the situation in India. Discussing this, he remarked:

I expect to spend the Xmas on the Continent or India. Everything depends on the situation in India. I am not my own master, but a willing slave of the whole nation.

The Hidustan Times, 7-11-1931

176. SPEECH AT CHILDREN'S HOUSE[2]

BOW,
Tuesday [November 3, 1931]

He said that if the children received the right kind of training and if the education was what it really should be—to bring out what was best in them —we could have great hopes of the future generation.

[1] Gandhiji made the statement at the conclusion of his talk with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald which lasted from 10.15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

[2] This was at the annual meeting of the Children's House at Bow, run under the auspices of the Kingsley Hall Settlement. Gandhiji also attended a party held before the meeting.

The general situation at the present moment is so gloomy and the only ray of light in the gloom is through the children who, profiting from our mistakes and bitterness and jealousies, can leave the world a better place for their being in it.

The Manchester Guardian, 4-11-1931

177. EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING[1]

LONDON,
November 4, 1931

MR. GANDHI: There is a reference to "treaties of cession". I do not know whether Sir Samuel Hoare can give any information on this. Will these treaties be secret treaties or open treaties?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE: Lord Reading says that he thinks there are no private treaties of any kind.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: That is so.

MR. GANDHI: But will the new treaties all be public?

LORD READING: I think, in a matter of this character, when you are dealing with rights which have to be ceded, that those who are interested in the Constitution, and who are framing it, and who are taking part in it, and who are co-operating with it, must know what the treaty obligations are between the States and the Government of India. . . .

MR. GANDHI: Would you add here that the Congress opinion is, or it is contended on behalf of the Congress, that the Federal Supreme Court should be the final Court of Appeal?[2]

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 337

[1] The Committee was considering paragraphs 52-66 of its Third Report, which dealt with the Federal Court.

[2] The Committee had just concluded consideration of paragraph 58 which said that the right to refer matters to the Court for an advisory opinion must be vested exclusively in the Governor-General, "acting, no doubt, in the normal course on his Ministers' advice". Shafa'at Ahmed Khan, Mohammad Shafi, Jinnah and others had opposed the inclusion of the last phrase which seemed to limit the power of the Governor-General and the Chairman had agreed to omit it.

178. SPEECH AT INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

LONDON,
November 4, 1931

I really do not know why I was brought here at all. Some of the medical friends came to me and said that, as I had gone to the students, I should accept this invitation. Also, I might say I was almost compelled to come. I have only five minutes. Of this scheme[1] that has been expounded you are the best judges. I really can pronounce no opinion whatsoever.

The Manchester Guardian, 5-11-1931

179. SPEECH AT MEETING OF POSTAL WORKERS' UNION

LONDON,
November 5, 1931

I was almost going to address you as comrades. Because the Congress is trying to undertake in India all life and activities, so we have labour unions, postal unions and several other unions taking up the Congress [work].[2] . . . I know something of the lives of postmen in India. Before I come to that, I must tell you what a pleasure it was to come. It was your enthusiasm that brought me, especially the story of your work for the Leper Asylum. I felt irresistibly drawn to you and was so pleased to find that postmen could take such living interest in the oppressed humanity in India. I felt it was too good to be true. This visit of mine is a compliment to you and I congratulate Mr. Cardinal. This work[3] done in India really touches only the fringe of it. Life in India is constituted quite differently from life in the West and we have not in India anything like State-regulated charity. People know the value of charity themselves—so in India philanthropy of people finds its way in a healthy channel. I cannot say that all charity[4]. . . is wisely exercised. You will find in streets lepers staring you in the face and it is difficult to pass through these

[1] This concerned the Indian Hospital in London.

[2] & [4] A few words that follow are not clear.

[3] In connection with leprosy

people to go to a leper asylum. Some have become rich and some are exploiters. In the midst of this position [workers have] dropped from the West. It is one of the few things that has come as a boon from the West.

There is no comparison between your postal employees and ours. Your officers give me joy, but there is nothing that I can offer you by way of comparison. Our men are a wretchedly paid people (10/6 per month), exceedingly hard-worked men. Among a few organizations that are ably conducted this Postal Department is one[1] . . . Postal union exists merely to ventilate grievances. I dare not suggest to my postmen to copy you and to subscribe for lepers. Whilst I congratulate you upon the noble work you are doing for lepers, I would like you to take more and more interest in your fellow workers in India. They have not got compact organizations. They are struggling to live—and they do not know how to express themselves precisely writing in a foreign tongue. It will be a matter of charity to these younger fellow-workers of yours in India to go to the substance of these matters. You are capable of varying interests. Give of the plenty that God has blessed you with.

You know what the post office does for us — it does our censoring work. I have come here to take complete independence for my country in the dictionary sense of the word. Some laugh at me—look at this man coming from a nation so utterly divided against itself. That is because you are being taught false history: that if Britain withdrew there would be chaos, darkness invisible, and there is an instance—Kashmir. The Maharaja had to invite the over-worked English soldiers to go and impose order. The whole thing seems to me to be stage-managed. I do not mean that the whole trouble was fomented and soldiers were to be asked for at particular hours. No, but it is the policy of divide and rule. The Maharaja could do nothing. You do not know what it is to be under a foreign yoke and to be a subject race—not holding arms. If that is the condition of the man in the street, condition of the Princes is worse. They cannot do as they choose. They have 21 [gun] salutes, palaces, but they are prisoners in their own palaces, because while they have power of life and death on their people, they have no real power. They have armies, but are they free to train them in any way they like? These Princes are the blotting-sheet of your armoury. Your thrown-out arms the Princes use. The Nizam is fabulously rich. Could he do

[1] A few words that follow are not clear.

anything he liked against Jathas? These Princes are utterly helpless; the restrictions may be well deserved or ill deserved, they are not independent but impotent. At the critical moment they cannot take measures they want to take. Residuary powers vest in the overlord. That is the state of things my whole being rebels against. [Indian Civil Service] is a freemasonry, the greatest secret society in the world; therefore, the spell that this Civil Service has cast upon you should be destroyed. I myself showered compliments on them. If I was a loyalist among loyalists, I was delighted, but after 30 years my eyes were opened and I found that underneath it was all brass. Therefore, when an Englishman tells me that you cannot defend yourself, he is paying an ill compliment to the British rule in India. We are one of the most ancient nations, depositories of a matchless civilization. Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek—where are they? Ancient India lives in the modern. A civilization which has persisted throughout all ages, through invasions of Genghis and Ghazni, India has lived. There was nothing so hopelessly wrong about India when the British came and they made it fight. We could have put up a fight. That nation which has survived all tests finds itself paralysed—that is not quite true though. I speak as a humble representative of a vast organization, the greatest the world possesses. This is a unique example in history of a world organization which has no army to back it and has carried on a sustained fight for 30 years. It is a romantic story, although I say it in all truth and humility. It is a nation which has hurled defiance against the whole Empire. Look at the other part of the enchanting story —constructive work of an amazing character. Postal Unions, Railway Unions covering thousands of members. We have men who have dedicated their lifetime: Malaviyaji. It is a libel both on England and India to say that we are incapable of managing our affairs. You can certainly mould public opinion. We may have to go through fiery ordeals of suffering and, when you hear of them, you will recall tonight's meeting and give your share. It is bound to count if it is knowingly, willingly, intelligently given.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

180. LETTER TO NICK SOLOMON

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 6, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. Of course I see your sister often.

You must excuse me from the task you have imposed upon me—I have really not the knack for writing messages to order. Without knowing anything of the paper, surroundings and the life, I should not know what to write.

Yours sincerely,

NICK SOLOMON, ESQ.
214 DICKINSON AVENUE
SWARTHMORE, PA., U.S.A.

From a photostat: S.N. 18249

181. LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER[1]

LONDON,
November 6, 1931

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

It is with deep concern that we hear rumours to the effect that provincial autonomy will be introduced as a first step in the political reconstruction of India, leaving federation and responsibility at the Centre to follow later.

We have read a statement to the contrary, which appeared in the daily Press this morning (namely, November 6). The rumours, however, are so strong and persistent that we must ask for leave to place our views before you beyond a possibility of doubt.

The needs of the present situation can be met only by a complete and comprehensive scheme, of which responsibility at the federal Centre must be as integral a part as autonomy of the

[1] Presumably drafted by Gandhiji

federating units. To divide the scheme into parts and bring into immediate operation one of the parts and postpone the other is to arouse fears of uncertainty and suspicions of the intentions of the Government.

We realize the importance of the Minorities question, of which no satisfactory solution has yet been found, but, at the same time, it must not be allowed to block the way to a full and comprehensive scheme of responsible government, which alone can provide an adequate settlement of the pressing problems.

We are, dear Prime Minister,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI,

M. M. MALAVIYA, V. S. S. SASTRI, T. B. SAPRU, P. SETHNA, COWASJI JEHANGIR, M. R. JAYAKAR, RAMCHANDRA RAO, (MRS.) SUBBARAYAN, A. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR, PURSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS, G. D. BIRLA, JAMAL MUHAMMAD, S. K. DATTA, UJJAL SINGH, MOONJE, (MRS.) SAROJINI NAIDU, TAMBE, RAJA NARENDRANATH, RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR, JADHAV, SAMPURAN SINGH, BAROOAH, N. M. JOSHI, V. V. GIRI, CHIMANLAL SETALVAD AND SHIVA RAO

The Hindustan Times, 11-11-1931

182. INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE BERNARD SHAW[1]

LONDON,
[November 6, 1931][2]

Mr. Bernard Shaw had long been wanting to see Gandhiji, and it was not without considerable hesitation that he came. He sat with Gandhiji for close on an hour, interrogating him on a bewildering variety of topics—ethnographical, religious, social, political, economic,—and his talk was illumined by his sparkling wit and sardonic humour. "I knew something about you and felt something in you of a kindred spirit. We belong to a very small community on earth", said he. Whilst his other questions were of universal importance, he could not help asking a question about the R.T.C. "Does not the Round Table Conference try your patience?" he asked, and Gandhiji had to confess with sorrow:

It requires more than the patience of a Job. The whole thing is a huge camouflage and the harangues that we are treated to

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". No other report of the interview is available.

[2] The date is taken from Gandhiji's diary.

are meant only to mark time. Why not, I ask them, make a clean breast and announce your policy and let us make our choice? But it does not seem to be in the English political nature to do so. It must go by round about and tortuous ways!

Young India, 19-11-1931

183. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

LONDON,
November 6, 1931

Q. Why refuse special representation to the Depressed Classes if you are agreeable to surrender to the Muslims and Sikhs?

A. I would gladly resist Muslims and Sikhs also, but special representation for Muslims has been my [stand] since 1916. As a practical man, I realize it is impracticable to escape the legacy of the Lucknow Pact[1], but, as a sincere well wisher of the Depressed Classes as well of the Nation, I should be failing in my duty if I agreed to special representation to smaller minorities. My offer to Muslims and Sikhs stands, but I certainly expect Muslims and Sikhs to agree to state that they are unable to escape seeking special protection, but that they feel any extension of special protection is undesirable. This is especially so since adult suffrage, for which I stand, ensures the fullest opportunity to all sections who serve the community to enter legislatures.

Q. Since the need for swaraj is imperative, why not surrender to the Depressed Classes also?

A. Because that is not swaraj. I consider it fundamental. I am devoted to untouchables, but do not agree to the vivisection of the community. I am not afraid of the failure of the Conference. As I feel it will fail, let us return to the country and seek other ways for swaraj.

The Hindustan Times, 9-11-1931

[1] Between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, conceding separate electorates for Muslims.

184. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 6, 1931

Gandhiji, commenting on the East Africa Report, confirmed Mr. Sastri's conclusion. The solution of the problem of overseas Indians lay in India's own internal freedom. In his inimitable style Gandhiji said:

If we can do something at the centre, the circumference will be all right. When the centre is unfixed, the circumference is merely a make-shift.

The Hindu, 7-11-1931

185. INTERVIEW TO "THE STAR"

[Before *November 7, 1931*]

Gandhiji emphatically denied the suggestion that his supporters have been clamouring for his return to India because of imminent revolutionary trouble. On the contrary he proposed to remain in England until his mission to the Conference was concluded. Even then a whirlwind tour to European capitals might delay his return. He said:

Reports of trouble and unrest have been greatly exaggerated and the Congress attitude misrepresented. I don't fear at the moment any likelihood of a return before the work is finished, but if my presence is desired, I shall of course go back.

The Hindu, 7-11-1931

186. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

Sunday, November 8, 1931

CHI. PREMA,

You unnecessarily worry about developments here. Do not draw any inferences from newspaper reports. Have confidence that I will not sell the country's self-respect. My method of work is bound to be different from that of others. You should not, therefore, make comparisons. You will understand in what the

difference lies only when I return and explain to you. The better thing, therefore, is not to occupy your mind with what is happening here. Do you understand what I mean?

I have no time to write more. Be satisfied with this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10266

187. LETTER TO INDU PAREKH

LONDON,
November 8, 1931

CHI. INDU,

Your letter is lying before me. I hope you are giving proper attention to your studies. See that you justify my faith in you. I hope you also keep good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6261

188. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 8, 1931

Questioned whether, if eighty per cent of the Congress demand is granted, the Congress would declare a fight, Gandhiji replied:

I am personally not interested in anything less than full hundred per cent. If, however, it is really eighty per cent that is going to be conceded, it is likely that the Congress will consider whether to work or to fight the Constitution.

The Hindustan Times, 11-11-1931

189. DIWALI MESSAGE[1]

LONDON,
November 9, 1931

True Diwali will come when swaraj is won. Let us remember that Diwali represents the annual celebration of the victory of the forces of Rama — that is, non-violence and truth—over those of Ravana — violence and untruth.

The Bombay Chronicle, 10-11-1931

190. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

LONDON,
November 9, 1931

In anticipation of the Congress Working Committee's decision I have already cancelled my Continental engagements. My eye has constantly been on the events in India, but I feel it will be wrong on my part to leave England while the Round Table Conference work keeps me here. I expect that I will be able to decide the date of my departure during this week.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10-11-1931

191. SPEECH AT FRIENDS' HOUSE[3]

LONDON,
November 9, 1931

You have asked me whether, though there was a voice crying in India for freedom, there were enough people ready to shoulder the responsibility of the country. To me the question is

[1] It being his Silence Day, Gandhiji wrote this message on a slip of paper when a correspondent wished him a happy Diwali.

[2] It being his Silence Day, Gandhiji made the statement in writing at 11 a.m. on his return from his visit to Oxford.

[3] The meeting, held in the evening, was organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The hall was filled to capacity and a large crowd had to go back disappointed.

quite reasonable. I shall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to answer this important question. Let me tell you that the real point at issue is the Congress demand on the one hand and, if I can so put it, reluctance on the part of responsible men to respond to that demand on the other. The Congress wants independence, which in other words means it wants control over Defence, External Relations and Finance, i.e., partnership at will, terminable by either party. That is the substance of the Congress demand, because the Congress honestly believes that the country has got capable hands to take over charge from the foreign Government.

But on the part of responsible men I have been seeing nothing during my wanderings and talks. On the other hand, I find they are raising considerable difficulties in conceding what is the legitimate claim of the Congress. I shall tell you without any modesty that the Congress seeks and claims to represent the whole mass of India. Its claim cannot be disputed. You know India is in villages and not in cities like Bombay, Calcutta or Madras. The Congress claims to represent also even the Princes in spite of themselves. Of course, it does not want to usurp their rights, but does justice to them also so long as their claims do not become inconsistent with those of the teeming millions. At the same time, the Congress offers the least resistance to them because it engages itself in putting forth the claims on behalf of the masses.

As you are devoted to seeking avenues for peace, you should have no difficulty in recognizing the claim of the Congress. The history of the past fifteen months before the Delhi Pact tells you that these masses were at war with Government, but it was a peaceful war for the simple reason that the masses had taken the pledge to win freedom without shedding a drop of blood. In this struggle, thousands upon thousands of women and children received lathi blows. Tens of thousands were sent to jail. Women of India rose as if by magic. There was a phenomenal awakening on their part. Thousands of villages responded to the Congress message. I myself do not know why and how I was not prepared for such a splendid response to me. There must have been the hand of God behind. These villages and villagers were all unarmed, because, remember, there is compulsory disarmament in my country.

But those who wielded lathis and used bayonets did not realize that these women and villagers had with them an instrument which was not perishable and which was far more effective. That instrument was in the form of love, non-violence and truth against heir force of arms and other brutal methods.

Though the word 'independence'. has a specific meaning in the English dictionary, to these masses it has also a larger and deeper meaning. They do not understand what 'Parliament', 'Responsible Government', or 'Councils' mean, but the word 'swaraj' gives them the meaning in the twinkling of an eye. Today they are paying the land revenue but they do not know why and how much is spent for the country's purposes. They do not even know that 55 crores are spent over the military. At the same time, remember, they have no fear from the frontiers, or the Afghans or any other place. As a matter of fact, the invasions never bother Indian villagers because invasions in India did not begin with the East India Company. We had them even before that period. These invaders did not go beyond the cities. They did not go beyond Delhi and, as you know from the geography of India, a vast number of its people living in villages were unaffected by the invasions. Moreover, internal quarrels do not affect the villagers. They therefore need no protection. Today the vast masses are living in abject starvation. They do not know what it is to have two meals a day. They have no bread and butter for themselves, nor a drop of milk for their children.

We have added dignity to their life and they have gained confidence that they will be able to make both ends meet and keep the wolf away from their doors.[1]

The Congress has purified politics. It has almost spiritualized it, though personally I do not like that word. We are out to win freedom with non-violence and truth, by removal of untouchability, and by recognition of every villager as a human being. Our non-co-operation fight signifies that no man can possibly tyrannize over another. Our whole movement is based on morality. We do not believe in the theory of the sweet will of our rulers. You know what we do in India. When authorities say do this, which we know is a wrong order, we say, thank you, we will not do it. We say we won't do anything which injures our self-respect, hurts our human dignity, and in such a struggle even millionaires have discarded their wealth and have ultimately become trustees of their wealth for the betterment of Indian villagers.

If British Ministers do not recognize my claim and want to keep the yoke on our neck, we may once again go through the fiery ordeal because, perhaps, we still need to suffer. Your Government has brought no benefit to my country. It has only emasculated it. It is a shame that we are made incapable of de-

[1] Gandhiji here was referring to the work done by the All-India Spinners' Association.

fending ourselves against foreign yoke, and even in our internal affairs. That is terribly disgraceful, but what have we done? We have today created selfless workers in every village. They are our civil servants and they will do anything thatt he Congress asks them to do. They are capable of governing the country. They know, as I do know, that we have already burnt our boats and are marching with our backs to the wall, because we are working for freedom of the teeming villagers.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-11-1931

192. INTERVIEW TO J. M. SEN GUPTA

LONDON,
November 10, 1931

I shall know much this week. I expect nothing either about the particular issues[1] like Chittagong or Hijli or about the Constitution. I have been in touch with everybody. I am staying on so that I may not miss a single opportunity of coming to a settlement or to be put in the wrong. If something does come out of these discussions, the release of detenus is a certainty, but I have little on which to base any hope.

The Hindustan Times, 13-11-1931

193. SPEECH AT LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS[2]

LONDON,
November 10, 1931

The main obstacle to my mission is—myself. So many people tell me that the Congress demand is pitched too high. When I come to grips, they begin to listen to me. Those responsible are equally guilty inasmuch as they are in no mood to listen. There does not seem to be that atmosphere which is responsive and receptive. Some of the best Englishmen and Englishwomen

[1] The interviewer had given Gandhiji an account of the situation in Bengal.

[2] According to a Press report "the theatre of the London School of Economics did not suffice to accommodate the members of the School's Students' Union who assembled to hear Mahatma Gandhi. The audience consisted mostly of English students and was perhaps the largest English audience Mahatma Gandhi had addressed in England".

feel that something has got to be done to define freedom. . . .[1] I have come here out of prison; with me there were thousands. The avowed object of the Settlement with the Viceroy was that Congress should be represented at the Round Table Conference. I and many Congressmen were trying to negotiate this. Generally at a round table people sit who are elected; who have got there in their own right. I do not sit in my own right, I am there on sufferance: out of nominated members you do not expect brilliant results. I have never known a conference with nominated members which has decided on principles.

We have set out to give our own blood. But the attitude here [is]: 'Look at these ungrateful fellows, they do not see the blessings of British rule.' It is not only the official mind, but those capable of shaping public mind. It was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who said that good government was no substitute for self-government. Those who are concerned do not feel that British rule has done good. Gokhale said it has emasculated us. How has that nation suddenly become conscious of its strength? The obstacle is the colossal ignorance of the best of Englishmen. The ignorance is nearly appalling. It is misinformation, false history. The Press contains nothing of what happens in India. Chittagong is a black page in history. Officers ran amok and created havoc on unarmed population. In Hijli innocent men were shot down; 16 were seriously injured. I would condemn attempts on lives of Englishmen in the severest language possible.

But what does this mean? There is a vital connection between Chittagong, Hijli and these attacks.

The whole of India is seething with unrest for which there are definite causes, and in which British rule is involved. Moral and material progress of India? The sum total is nil. See what a hurdle race I have to run. I give you absolute assurance that day and night I am trying my very best to reach a solution and am putting no obstacle in the way. We have burnt our boats and we have our backs to the wall. I want freedom in the name of untouchables, poor masses. I would sacrifice a million lives, and that freedom would be cheaply bought. Voluntary sacrifice of a million lives is infinitely preferable to the death millions are undergoing by inches. I cannot tolerate this. . . .[2] The only restriction is that we shall not soil our fingers with the blood of our opponents and we will not descend to untruth.

We won't have the tremendous weight of an army of occupation . . .[3] We pay the bulk of our savings to our door-keepers.

[1], [2] & [3] Some words are not clear here.

You have no door-keepers, only unequalled, matchless policemen. The difference between freedom and slavery. The axe would descend upon the military budget. When Mir Alam Khan attacked me, an Englishman saved my life and his daughter sang "Lead Kindly Light". Are the ten thousand Mussalmans who went to jail going to be traitors? . . .[1] Immediately the wedge is withdrawn we shall close our ranks. If the God of the Afghans tells them that they should take our lives, we shall invoke that very God—though they are taking the name of that God five times a day. If God wants it, we will challenge Him too. Let us shed the fear of man.

A NEGRO STUDENT : You love an Englishman as much as an Indian and yet you dislike British Government. Now British people make up the Government.

GANDHIJI : Man is superior to his method. A man's method may be vile, and yet you may not aptly apply the adjective to the man himself. . . .[2] British system is Satanic. But, in spite of British system being Satanic, I love the British like my brothers. I have a boy who has rebelled against me. Yet I love that boy equally as I do the other brothers. I detest his methods and ways. I have learnt from domestic law that, if I have humanity in me, I should love the Britisher whom God has made. And yet I detest his method and am doing my best to destroy his method. . . .[3]

In the war of non-violence we walk in the fear of God, give no secret information, brook no treacherousness.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

194. LETTER TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You have been most diligent in writing to me and to Mahadev and encouraging others to write to me about the much-talked-of visit of mine to America. I do not know, however, whether it was at all necessary for you to take all this trouble either for yourself or others. I never entertained the slightest doubt about the wisdom of your judgment, and I have been absolutely clear in my statements to every Pressman that I would not go to America until you had decided to bring me out there. Having made up my mind to

[1], [2] & [3] Some words are not clear here.

trust your judgment, was I not right in telling all and sundry that you were the keeper of my conscience in this matter?

Of course, it has thrown a little more responsibility upon you, but your shoulders are broad enough to bear it and I am saved a lot of worry in arguing with importunate friends and reporters.

I met Mr. Bomanji fairly often during the few days that he was here. He is now on his way to India.

Yours sincerely,

THE REVEREND JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, D.D.

From a photostat: S.N. 18283

195. LETTER TO H. H. MONTGOMERY

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have kept your long letter by me all these days to be able to send you just a line of thanks for it and for the sentiments expressed therein. Charlie Andrews also shared it with me and he found great joy to read the sentences about him.

Yours sincerely,

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP MONTGOMERY
NEW PARK
MOVILLE
CO. DONEGAL, IRELAND

From a photostat: S.N. 18131

196. LETTER TO VIVIAN BUTLER BURKE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have seen your letter addressed to a mutual friend. I have no knowledge of a previous letter from you.

As you have rightly surmised, it is true that my programme outside London is regulated by Mr. Andrews. I do not share the

view that you hold.[1] I have the highest regard for Mr. Andrews. I have known him intimately for nearly twenty years, and have had no occasion whatever to repent of having followed his advice.[2]

I am very sorry to inform you that my contemplated visit to Ireland is likely to be dropped, because of a peremptory summons from India. If it is at all possible, however, I hope to visit Ireland, in which case I shall stay with a private friend.

Yours sincerely,

MISS VIVIAN BUTLER BURKE
DUGORT
WESTPORT, CO. MAYO

From a photostat: S.N. 18207

197. LETTER TO F. B. FISHER

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have been receiving your very warm letters. I have time just to say this.

With reference to the American visit, my own instinct was that the time had not arrived to visit America. That instinct still abides. I had made up my mind when the visit was first talked about that

[1] The addressee had said it was a pity that Gandhiji's plans were left to C. F. Andrews and quoted an Irish saying: "One must never trust the horns of a bull and the smile of an Englishman."

[2] As to this the addressee, writing on November 14, said: " . . . I only know Mr. Andrews through Romain Rolland's book about you; it was Indian followers of your own who told me, in former years, that they did not trust him, and it was suggested to me that he might have been the cause of my invitation to Ireland having been ignored. I know of one case where one of the rare Englishmen who have consistently and courageously spoken for India's right to complete freedom, and who wrote to you, was answered slightingly by Mr. Andrews's secretary. As I am not a believer in Christianity myself—finding in Eastern religions what appeals to me most—I have an instinctive mistrust of Christian missionaries!—especially where Christian or Imperial interests are at stake! There are very, very few Englishmen willing to see their Empire destroyed for the sake of justice."

To which Gandhiji authorized the following reply: "Mr. Gandhi has your letter. You did a monstrous injustice to Mr. Andrews and yourself in referring to Mr. Andrews as you did, for which you will be sorry when you realize it."

I would do as Dr. Haynes[1] advised me. This was about 3 years ago or more when the visit was first talked about.

As you know we have since met. He was in London just waiting for me, and I have told him that I would be guided entirely by him in connection with the pressing invitations that I received from America on my landing here.

Dr. Holmes and several other friends are decidedly of the opinion that it would be a mistake for me to go to America. Your decision therefore has come upon me as a surprise. You are just as dear a friend to me as Dr. Holmes; I shall therefore look forward to the result of your conversations with him. You know Richard Gregg too. He also supports Dr. Holmes and enforces the opinion by adding that winter will not be the proper season for me to visit America.

Yours sincerely,

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP FISHER
THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

From a photostat: S.N. 18282

198. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 11, 1931

I do not think the Conference must fail. If that were my conviction I should not stay here at all. What I believe is that, unless something startling happens and unless all that is good in English life conspires together to bring about a satisfactory result, the Conference is likely to fail.

Q. If the Conference were to fail, to whom would you apportion the blame?

A. I should distribute the blame evenly between the Government and the whole of the Conference delegates. I am not prepared to blame one party alone, but I am convinced that, if the National Government really wills it, the Conference need not fail at all.

Q. How long do you think it will take you to be satisfied that such a will is manifest in the National Government?

[1] Dr. John Haynes Holmes

A. I shall know in a week. I shall continue to hope until I have positive evidence that nothing is to be gained from my further stay in England. I am not going to think of civil disobedience as long as there is the slightest vestige of hope, and I can give my absolute assurance to all concerned that there will be no civil disobedience in connection with the Conference as long as there is a possibility of carrying on negotiations such as I am engaged in at the present moment. I have come here with a fixed determination of making every effort humanly possible to achieve an honourable settlement—honourable both to Great Britain and to India.

In a reference to the administrators in England, Mr. Gandhi said:

The administrators here, so far as I am concerned, [*sic*] but I have a suspicion that the information they have about India and what is going on there at present is at variance with the true situation as I know it, and this is a terrible handicap in spite of all their goodwill and good wishes. It has been a matter of the deepest regret to me that, for reasons I cannot understand, events of the gravest importance do not appear in the Press, and I doubt if the authorities here know them from other sources.

The atrocities that took place in Chittagong under the very nose of the officials, and as the report before me says, "with their connivance, if not direct encouragement", seems to me to be unknown to them and certainly has not been noticed by the Press, and this is only one out of the many instances that I could quote.

Yorkshire Post, 12-11-1931

199. SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES TO R.T.C.

LONDON,
November 11, 1931

At a conference of the Round Table Conference delegates this evening, Mahatma Gandhi fully explained his conception of provincial autonomy, which is understood to differ entirely from what is outlined in the Simon Report and the Government of India despatch. Mahatma Gandhi's main idea contemplates unfettered popular contrulol of all subjects, Governors not possessing any reserve powers, while the provinces should be so completely autonomous that interference from the Centre in such matters as internal disorders will be impossible except at the Provinces' request. Moreover the Provinces should be free to refuse contributions to the Central Government if they so desire.

The Hindustan Times, 14-11-1931

200. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

[Before *November 12, 1931*][1]

The whole report is garbled,[2] and contradicts what I am prepared to accept. It is wholly unnecessary for me to go into the details. It is sufficient for me to say unequivocally that there is no difference in substance between what Mr. Sastri and other friends want and what I am prepared to accept.

The Bombay Chronicle, 14-11-1931

201. SPEECH AT COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA LEAGUE[3]

LONDON,
November 12, 1931

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst this morning. The change that you have made in the wording of your object is a good change, but I would suggest that you went a step further and have as your object *purna* swaraj which is the Indian rendering of complete independence. The original objective of the Indian National Congress was swaraj, but since certain conventional meanings grew up round this term, the Congress, in order to make its claim quite clear, added one word '*purna*', which means complete.

I have always been of the opinion that a Committee of the nature of the Commonwealth of India League should avoid affiliation to the Congress, in order that it may retain an independent existence, that it may be at liberty to exercise an independent judgment, thereby acquiring a greater influence with public opinion in this country than if it were merely the mouthpiece of

[1] The statement was originally published in *The Hindu* of this date.

[2] The reference is to the rumours that Gandhiji was strongly inclined to accept Provincial Autonomy and that his attitude was not shared by Srinivasa Sastri, Sapru and others.

[3] This was a meeting of the Executive Committee and Parliamentary Committee of the League. Among those present were Horrabin, Chairman, and V. K. Krishna Menon, Secretary.

the Indian National Congress. I think it would be a calamity for an organization of this nature to occupy the position merely of a creation of the Congress. I have also always advised the Congress against affiliating outside. Indian Congress has in the past affiliated with England,[1] but it has found it a mistake, and is now refusing affiliation with America and other countries. What you have done in remaining outside the Congress is certainly the very best thing.

As to the work which you are doing in this country, my opinion is that nothing is going to come out of this Conference. I have made this statement, but please do not think for a moment that I am, therefore, now doing nothing, or that I am obstructing the Conference in its passage towards the achievement of a Constitution for India. On the contrary, the less hope I see from outside the more efforts I have been making to achieve success from the inside. I do not want to put my country through any fiery ordeal again, but if necessary I shall do so, and I know that it will be a much more terrible struggle this time even than before, and therefore, I shall make every attempt of which a human being is capable to bring about an honourable settlement through negotiations. But remember I shall work inside the three corners of my mandate. That means I believe in that mandate and anything less than the mandate would not be enough. We must have control over Finance and the Army. However impracticable this may appear to men over here, the Congress believes that it can handle these matters as successfully, nay, even more successfully, than the Government has done.

The manipulation of the Exchange had been started before the time of Lord Curzon and through this policy 85 per cent | o the population of India had suffered badly. The fixing of the rupee to the pound at a fixed price of one shilling and six pence has meant that the Indian agriculturists have to sell at prices that will not even cover the cost of production. Even the advisers of the India Office in this country have admitted that, if the rupee was set free, the agriculturists would profit. The price of imports would certainly rise, but the mass of the Indian people is so little dependent upon imports that it would not be affected. The difficulty is that the majority of Britishers have no knowledge of Indian conditions, and they draw the wrong comparisons.

[1] The Congress had set up the British Committee in London which functioned till it was abolished by a resolution at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in 1920; *vide* Vol. XIX.

The rupee has been sustained to make a greater scope for exports from this country to India. Each time that the rupee has been fixed it has been against the advice of Indian experts. The Government is the party that has benefited. By fixing the rupee to the pound it has saved itself from insolvency. If financial control were in the hands of Indians, the financial policy would be pursued in the interests of the agriculturists, and not so much in the interests of the exporters.

India is an exporting country, and in nine out of every ten years her exports have exceeded her imports, but the balance of gain has been used either for Civil Service pensions or as capital for what I consider wild-cat schemes such as Sukkur Barrage, etc.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the scanty Press space that has been given to the Government's acknowledgment of hopeless miscalculations over this scheme. From a small corner in the Press he had seen that the actual cost of the irrigation scheme was twice of that estimated. Mahatma Gandhi stated that he had no confidence in these large schemes which the Government put forward as they would not benefit the small agriculturists, but merely serve to strengthen and extend the capitalist system.

Mahatma Gandhi then reasserted the Congress demand for complete control of finance and fiscal policy. He said India must not be wrapped in cotton-wool. She must be given the chance even of making atrocious blunders. But in spite of every effort, he added, he had failed to impress this fact upon the official mind, which was fed upon blue-books and histories of India written by Englishmen, that is, the conquerors. He found himself baffled by the wall of ignorance around him in this country. Continuing, he said:

Hence it is necessary that some of you in England should give yourselves up to the task of enlightening this ignorance, to start a hurricane propaganda and the knowledge that so many in this country are working for us will perhaps soften the agony of those who are suffering over there. We shall treasure the knowledge of your friendship, and be heartened by you as Emily Hobhouse heartened those who suffered in South Africa during the Boer War. I ask you to help us, and if we are losing heart, perhaps send us a cablegram saying, 'Never mind, we Englishmen are watching and wishing you success.' I ask you to pray for us, anything that will give us encouragement and sympathy. But please do it on one condition, that you believe that our cause is worthy. If you think that we are making extravagant demands, then tell us that and reject our demands. Then, if we see that friends are forsaking us, we shall perforce reconsider our position and think again whether what we demand is just. But in the last resort our

reliance is on God. We do not ask our freedom as a gift, but as the fruit of our labours and sufferings. I came here to negotiate because I thought we had suffered enough. If the Conference fails, I shall know that India must suffer still more to impress this country with the justice of her demand.

Mr. Horrabin then asked Mahatma Gandhi what particular sources of information would be available to the League in its work of spreading true information about India, and Mahatma Gandhi said that the resources of the Congress would always be at the disposal of the League. He said:

Ask for whatever you want, and it will be given to you at once. We shall not hesitate to send information by cable if necessary, also all the literature that you need. If you like, we could arrange to send you a weekly service of news. Ask, and we shall supply, and if there are any difficulties with the authorities over information we have given you, please call upon us to substantiate whatever news we have given you. Put us to the proof and if we are wrong we shall apologize, or you will apologize on our behalf to the India Office. We shall be honest and shall not exaggerate or mislead because the success of our struggle does not depend upon false or exaggerated information. The policy of the Congress is to admit errors immediately and to expose every exaggeration of which its members have been guilty.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson asked Mahatma Gandhi if he thought it advisable to start a campaign about the political prisoners in India. Mahatma Gandhi in reply pointed out that, before such a campaign could be successfully begun, detailed information was necessary, as each case stood on its own merits.

Just at present the attention of the authorities could not be sufficiently engaged, but later on, if the Conference broke down then would be the time to start such a campaign. The Congress offices will always be ready to send all the information that is needed, and you must remember that it is an obstinate Government that you have to deal with.

Asked what he considered were the chief agencies responsible for the non-success of the Conference, Mahatma Gandhi replied that he believed the fault to lie equally with the Indians for failing to reach a settlement over the communal question, and with the British Government for the wrong lead that it had given in the early stages of the Conference. By making the communal question the central issue in the whole scheme, the Government had laid the way open for Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to pull their own ways. In reality, the communal question was only one of many issues, and the Conference was not necessarily the instrument to bring about a communal settlement. When the

Government called together the Conference, it knew that the communal leaders had not come to an agreement, and by bringing the communal question to the fore immediately the Government prepared the way for disunion, and for perpetuating that disunion. Also one must remember that the Conference is a packed Conference of non-responsible members. What the British Government did not realize was that the Congress is the nation as far as swaraj is concerned. Had the Government recognized this instead of treating the Congress as just one among the other parties, all this time would not have been wasted.

I am confident that ultimately it is only with the Congress that your Government will have to reckon. As for myself, although I may not represent Sir Mahomed Shafi, I do claim to represent the Mussalmans; though I do not represent Dr. Ambedkar, I do represent the Depressed Classes; though not Dr. Dutta, but the Christians.

These people do not want separate representation. I claim that 330 millions of the Indian people are represented by the Congress. The interests of all classes must be subservient to the interests of the masses. It is this representative character of the Congress that is not recognized by the Government and herein lies the chief blame.

When asked whether he did not think it was essential, should the Conference break down, that he should explain his position either at a public meeting or at least to a group of people in this country, Mahatma Gandhi said that he was very anxious to have an opportunity for putting forward his reasons for acting as he did, that he very much wished to speak to a group, but that his original promise not to hinder the Government would prevent his making any public declaration.

In discussing the question of the multiplicity of organizations in this country working for India, Mahatma Gandhi urged that every effort should be made at amalgamation of these organizations. All energies must be concentrated, he added, into work or through one channel, and that, in the main, the burden should fall upon English people who could act with Indian advice. His advice to the Commonwealth of India League was to widen their organization as much as possible and to invite co-operation from all possible quarters.

The Hindustan Times, 4-12-1931

202. TELEGRAM TO LORD IRWIN

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

CONFERENCE CRUMBLING DOWN. LEAVING LONDON NEXT THURSDAY.[1]

The Hindustan Times, 16-11-1931

203. INTERVIEW TO "NEWS CHRONICLE"[2]

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

Q. I want to know, Mr. Gandhi, whether you are going to sign the request to the Prime Minister to arbitrate in the dispute between the Hindus and Muslims, which seems now almost certain to bring about the failure of the Round Table Conference.

A. I am afraid I cannot do so. I should have no objection to Mr. MacDonald personally as arbitrator. Do not mistake me there.

But to ask him, as Prime Minister, to arbitrate would be to petition the British Government to do so and that would be to put myself in a false position in respect of the Congress mandate.

The Government, on its side, would at once conceive itself to be in a position to bargain on matters in which, in my view, no bargain is possible—I have in mind, for example, the Army and Finance.

Mr. Gandhi went on to say that his refusal to sign the request did not mean that Mr. MacDonald need be prevented from arbitrating. He continued:

I myself would agree to any solution of the minorities problem accepted by the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs.

But, for me, the minorities problem does not travel beyond the three communities, and if arbitration were contemplated with regard to the representation on the legislatures of the other minorities, I could not tolerate it. In my view that would be the negation of responsible government.

[1] Gandhiji actually left London on December 5, 1931.

[2] Gandhiji was interviewed by the paper's Foreign Editor.

I asked Mr. Gandhi whether, in view of the general feeling that the Conference was certain now to end in calamitous failure, he himself preserved any hope.

He answered that he was not yet altogether hopeless, although at the moment he saw little on the horizon to justify it. He added:

But I myself and others are using every possible means and sparing no effort to save the Conference even at the eleventh hour.

If we have to go back empty-handed as we are, I think the unavoidable consequences in India will be deplorable.

Q. But may I not take it, Mr. Gandhi, that you will be ready to put into effect so much of the new scheme as has been agreed upon in London?

A. I would gladly do so, but without the co-operation of the three communities nothing could be done. It is impossible that the provincial legislatures should come into being until that is assured.

Provincial autonomy is impossible without a statutory guarantee of autonomy at the Centre. We have experienced enough already to show that autonomy in the Provinces cannot be worked without complete Central responsibility.

What the public hitherto has failed to realize is that there is a connection between the Centre and the Provinces so vital that the provinces would be entirely helpless without autonomy in the Centre.

Q. And what of the proposed Constituent Assembly, the Central Convention, which it is said had been under discussion? Does that mean that it has been discussed between the Government and the Indian leaders?

A. It has been discussed with me. But I am afraid the discussion is already at an end.

I could not possibly agree to the meeting of any such Assembly without a statutory guarantee of the same indispensable responsibility at the Centre.

I have dared to discuss provincial apart from Central autonomy simply in order to show the impossibility of creating autonomous provinces without the guarantee of Central responsibility—and yet, even some of my friends in Fleet Street have reported me as having endorsed provincial autonomy as a first instalment.

This is a thing I have never contemplated, apart from a guarantee that responsible government at the Centre will come into being almost immediately after the working of provincial authority.

I say 'almost immediately' because I have contemplated a short interval in view of certain difficulties represented to me.

Under my proposal the same statute will provide for provincial autonomy and complete responsibility at the Centre and will create the machinery for bringing into existence the Federal and Central structure.

News Chronicle, 14-11-1931

204. SPEECH AT MINORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

PRIME MINISTER AND FELLOW DELEGATES,

It is not without very considerable hesitation and shame that I take part in the discussion on the minorities question. I have not been able to read with the care and attention that it deserves the memorandum[1] sent to the Delegates on behalf of certain minorities and received this morning.

Before I offer a few remarks on that memorandum, with your permission and with all the deference and respect that are your due, I would express my dissent from the view that you put before this Committee, that the inability to solve the communal question was hampering the progress of Constitution-building, and that it was an indispensable condition prior to the building of any such Constitution. I expressed at an early stage of the sittings of this Committee that I did not share that view. The experience that I have since gained has confirmed me in that view; and, if you will pardon me for saying so, it was because of the emphasis that was laid last year and repeated this year upon this difficulty, that the different communities were encouraged to press with all the vehemence at their command their own respective views.

[1] The memorandum, submitted "on behalf of the Mohammedans, the Depressed Classes, the Anglo-Indians, the Europeans and a considerable section of Indian Christian groups", demanded *inter alia* that these communities "shall have representation in all legislatures through separate electorates . . . provided that, after a lapse of ten years, it will be open to Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal and any minority communities in any other provinces to accept joint electorates. . . . With regard to the Depressed Classes no change to joint electorates . . . shall be made until after 20 years. . . ." Special claims were advanced on behalf of Mussalmans, the Depressed Classes, the Anglo-Indians and the Europeans. The document was signed by the Aga Khan, Dr. Ambedkar, Rao Bahadur Pannirselvam, Sir Henry Gidney and Sir Hubert Carr.

It would have been against human nature if they had done otherwise. All of them thought that this was the time to press forward their claims for all they were worth, and I venture to suggest again that this very emphasis has defeated the purpose which I have no doubt it had in view. Having received that encouragement, we have failed to arrive at an agreement. I therefore associate myself entirely with the view, expressed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, that it is not this question which is the fulcrum, it is not this question which is the central fact, but the central fact is the Constitution-building.

I am quite certain that you did not convene this Round Table Conference and bring us all six thousand miles away from our homes and occupations to settle the communal question, but you convened us, you made deliberate declarations that we were invited to come here, to share the process of Constitution-building, and that, before we went away from your hospitable shores, we should have the certain conviction that we had built up an honourable and a respectable framework for the freedom of India, and that it awaited only the imprimatur of the approval of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Now, at the present moment, we are face to face with a wholly different situation, namely, that, because there is no communal settlement agreed to by us, there is to be no building of the Constitution, and that, as a last resort and as the last touch, you will announce the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the Constitution and all the matters that may arise from it. I cannot help feeling that it would be a sorry ending to a Conference which was brought into being with so much trumpeting and with so much hope excited in the minds and in the breasts of many people.

Coming to this document, I accept the thanks that have been given to me by Sir Hubert Carr. Had it not been for the remarks that I made when I shouldered that burden, and had not it been for my utter failure to bring about a solution, Sir Hubert Carr rightly says he would not have found the very admirable solution that he has been able, in common with the other minorities, to present to this Committee for consideration and finally for the consideration and approval of His Majesty's Government.

I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but, in my opinion, what they have done is to sit by the carcass, and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcass.

As representing the predominant political organization in

India, I have no hesitation in saying to His Majesty's Government, to those friends who seek to represent or who think they represent the minorities mentioned against their names, and indeed to the whole world, that this scheme is not one designed to achieve responsible government, but is undoubtedly a scheme designed to share power with the bureaucracy.

If that is the intention—and it is the intention running through the whole of that document—I wish them well, and the Congress is entirely out of it. The Congress will wander no matter how many years in the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible government can never grow.

I am astonished that Sir Hubert Carr should tell us that they have evolved a scheme which, being designed only for a temporary period, would not damage the cause of nationalism, but, at the end of ten years, we would all find ourselves hugging one another and throwing ourselves into one another's laps. My political experience teaches me a wholly different lesson. If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices, it should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it; it is a strain which no Government can possibly bear.

There is the coping-stone to the structure, and I am surprised, Mr. Prime Minister, that you allowed yourself to mention this as if it was an indisputable fact, namely, that the proposals may be taken as being acceptable to well over one hundred and fifteen millions of people, or about 46 per cent of the population of India. You had a striking demonstration of the inaccuracy of this figure. You have had, on behalf of the women, a complete repudiation of special representation, and as they happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent is somewhat reduced, but not only that: the Congress may be a very insignificant organization, but I have not hesitated to make the claim, and I am not ashamed to repeat the claim, that the Congress claims to represent 85 per cent of the population not merely of British India but of the whole of India.

Subject to all the questions that may be raised, I repeat the claim with all the emphasis at my command that the Congress, by right of service, claims to represent that population which is called the agricultural population of India, and I would accept the challenge, if the Government were to issue the challenge, that we should have a referendum in India, and you would immediately find whether the Congress represents them or whether it does not represent them. But I go a step further. At the present moment if

you were to examine the register of the Congress, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented and represents on its register a very large number of Mohammedans. Several thousand Mohammedans went to jail last year under the banner of the Congress. The Congress today has several thousand Mohammedans on its register. The Congress has thousands of untouchables on its register. The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress register. With all deference to the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari, even landlords and even mill-owners and millionaires are represented there. I admit that they are coming to the Congress slowly, cautiously, but the Congress is trying to serve them also. The Congress undoubtedly represents Labour. Therefore, this claim that the proposals set forth in this memorandum are acceptable to well over one hundred and fifteen millions of people needs to be taken with a very great deal of reservation and caution.

One word more and I shall have done. You have had presented to you and circulated to the members, I hope, the Congress proposal in connection with the communal problem.[1] I venture to submit that, of all the schemes that I have seen, it is the most workable scheme, but I may be in error there. I admit that it has not commended itself to the representatives of the communities at this table, but it has commended itself to the representatives of these very classes in India. It is not the creation of one brain, but it is the creation of a Committee on which various important parties were represented.

Therefore, you have got on behalf of the Congress that scheme; but the Congress has also suggested that there should be an impartial arbitration. Through arbitration all over the world people have adjusted their differences, and the Congress is always open to accept any decision of an arbitration court. I have myself ventured to suggest that there might be appointed by the Government a judicial tribunal which would examine this case and give its decision. But if none of these things are acceptable to any of us, and if this is the *sine qua non* of any Constitution-building, then I say it will be much better for us that we should remain without so-called responsible Government than that we should accept this claim.

I would like to repeat what I have said before, that while the Congress will always accept any solution that may be acceptable to the Hindus, the Mohammedans and the Sikhs, Congress will be

[1] *Vide* pp. 115-9.

no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other minorities. The Congress will always endorse clauses or reservations as to fundamental rights and civil liberty. It will be open to everybody to be placed on the voters' roll and to appeal to the common body of the electorates.

In my humble opinion, the proposition enunciated by Sir Hubert Carr is the very negation of responsible Government, the very negation of nationalism. If he says that, if you want a live European on the legislature, then he must be elected by the Europeans themselves, well, Heaven help India if India has to have representatives elected by these several, special, cut-up groups. That European will serve India as a whole, and that European only, who commands the approval of the common electorate and not the mere Europeans. This very idea suggests that the responsible Government will always have to contend against these interests which will always be in conflict against the national spirit—against this body of 85 per cent of the agricultural population. To me it is an unthinkable thing. If we are going to bring into being responsible Government and if we are going to get real freedom, then I venture to suggest that it should be the proud privilege and the duty of every one of these so-called special classes to seek entry into the Legislatures through this open door, through the election and approval of the common body of electorates. You know that Congress is wedded to adult suffrage, and under adult suffrage it will be open to all to be placed on the voters' list. More than that nobody can ask.

One word more as to the so-called untouchables.

I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities, but the claims advanced on behalf of the untouchables, that to me is the "unkindest cut of all". It means the perpetual bar-sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself in my own person to represent the vast mass of the untouchables. Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the untouchables, their vote, and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the untouchables that separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar-sinister, which is the shame, not of them, but of orthodox Hinduism.

Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today there is a body of Hindu reformers who are pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our

census untouchables classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Mohammedans, so may Europeans. Will untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. Therefore, with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar, and for his desire to see the untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say in all humility that here the great wrong under which he has laboured and perhaps the bitter experiences that he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of the untouchables, which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility, and I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the untouchables of India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages. Those who speak of the political rights of untouchables do not know their India, do not know how Indian society is today constructed, and therefore I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that, if I was the only person to resist this thing, I would resist it with my life.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 543-4

205. SPEECH AT WESTMINSTER SCHOOL[1]

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

At the present moment the Conference seems to have fizzled out and there seems to be no ray of hope in the impenetrable gloom. But some of your great men are trying their best to avoid a catastrophe. If they fail and if the Conference ultimately ends in a fiasco, as I fear it will, there will be thousands

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". No other report of the speech is available.

upon thousands ready to go through the fire of suffering, and will not quail before the fiercest repression. We are promised that the repression that is coming will be ten times as fierce as last year's. But I shall pray that humanity may be spared that exhibition of brute power.

Young India, 26-11-1931

206. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*

LONDON,
November 14, 1931

Q. What is your attitude towards the Prime Minister's request that all parties should agree to his arbitration?

A. I am unable to agree that a signed request should be made to the Premier to arbitrate, but I must explain that I am not opposed either to Mr. MacDonald personally or to the principle of arbitration. On the contrary, I have always pleaded for parties agreeing to arbitration, but I must refuse to be a party to requesting the Premier to arbitrate because the Premier makes the suggestion not in his private capacity as Mr. MacDonald, but as the Premier where he is placed by the Cabinet. He, therefore, speaks on behalf of the Government and I cannot be a party to the Government deciding this issue. It is because I have a high sense of honour that I refuse to seek the obligation of the Government hand. I cannot compromise as regards the Congress political demands. I can accept only such adjustments as are manifest in the interest of India. Therefore, I will accept no obligation.

Q. Does this mean that there can be no response to the Premier's request?

A. No, there can be. In fact, friends are considering addressing a joint letter to the Premier leaving me out. In fact, my consent to the Premier arbitrating is totally unnecessary since I represent the Congress and not any community. Also because, in terms of the Congress solution, I am bound to accept any settlement acceptable to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Therefore, if Premier MacDonald arbitrates and Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims accept it, I am bound to accept the same. There is also another way. All the parties may sign a letter accepting arbitration on which the parties might nominate Mr. MacDonald as arbitrator. But I must repeat that such an arbitration must concern Hindus,

Sikhs and Muslims. If any award deals with other communities, I cannot take a tolerant position, because I am bound to resist every attempt to vivisect India converting the nation's legislature into a communal cockpit.

Q. But you promised, speaking at the Federal Committee, to provide through convention or co-option adequate representation to smaller minorities, in case they were not elected through the open door?

A. I have not withdrawn the offer. It stands. I accept as legitimate demands made on behalf of smaller minorities that, if they were not elected through the open door the defect must be remedied. I am prepared to provide through convention or co-option, but would not agree to separate electorates or special reservation.

Q. Are other delegates likely to approach the Premier?

A. I do not know. The delegates discussed the question, but were unable to reach any decision.

Q. Is there any prospect of a communal settlement now or in the immediate present?

A. I can say no effort will be spared for that purpose, but I see no prospects.

Q. Will you continue your efforts to solve the communal deadlock when you return to India?

A. Certainly. I am sure to reach an agreement in India, though I have no concrete plans just now.

Q. Whose scheme is this to introduce provincial autonomy into the provincial legislatures electing Constituent Assembly?

A. It is correct to say that the scheme was discussed in Government circles with me and also other delegates. I am unable to say whether it is Government's scheme, but it is not proposed by any delegate.

Q. Is it true that you are agreeable to the scheme with slight modifications?

A. No, I am totally opposed to the scheme of provincial autonomy as a first instalment. The only difference between others and myself is, they refused to discuss this scheme, while I dared to discuss the scheme.

Q. What are the conditions attached to your scheme?

A. Firstly, the statute which embodies provincial autonomy must also embody responsibility at the Centre. Secondly, it must

also fix a time limit within which the Federal Constitution with responsibility at the Centre will come into operation. I suggested six months. Thirdly, the provinces must enjoy practically sovereign rights.

Q. What is then left for the Constituent Assembly to decide?

A. It can be reserved for the Constituent Assembly to discuss whether it is through single or bicameral legislature and what the strength of the Federal Legislature should be. But I have left no doubt in anybody's mind that the decision must be reached here and now as regards responsibility at the Centre, especially, the control of Finance, Army and Foreign Affairs.

Q. Have you given up all hopes of reaching a settlement?

A. No, I am sparing no endeavour to explore all avenues for a settlement. I would not be surprised if a settlement were reached even at the twelfth hour.

Mahatma Gandhi was asked if the Conference failed to reach a settlement, what effects would it have on India.

Mahatmaji answered if the Congress failed to reach a settlement here and now, it must inevitably result in the revival immediately of civil disobedience with all its consequences, because the failure of the Conference means that Indian reformers who are wedded to responsibility at the Centre must not hope to expect the Government to meet them for an indefinite time. The civil disobedience is bound to start immediately once it is clear that the Conference has failed.

The Hindustan Times, 16-11-1931 and 18-11-1931

207. LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 14, 1931

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I know that letters signed by delegates are being sent to you inviting you to settle the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh question. You will notice the absence of my signature in any of those letters. Common friends desirous of seeing a successful issue to the Round Table Conference have suggested that it would help you if I sent a letter explaining why I do not sign the letters.

I should have no hesitation in putting my signature to a letter appointing you sole arbitrator in your individual capacity to settle

the communal question, so far as the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are concerned, but you will appreciate my hesitation in consenting to your appointment as arbitrator in your capacity as Prime Minister, for the simple reason that if I did so, I should feel embarrassed in presenting the Congress claim on the constitutional issue. But my reluctance does not mean that the Congress will in any way resist your award; in fact Congress cannot do so, for it is bound by a resolution to approve of any solution that is acceptable to the three parties concerned, and if those claiming to represent the three communities refer the matter for your decision, the Congress cannot object to your award.

The position regarding the other minorities is different. You know the position taken up on behalf of the Congress. As I reiterated at the last meeting of the Minorities Committee, in my opinion they should be satisfied with complete protection of their civic and religious rights and of all their legitimate interests. There are many extra-legal ways that can be suggested for ensuring the election of deserving candidates from all the other minorities through the ordinary electorate, and I feel that that is the only proper and legitimate course.

In any case, the Congress will never be reconciled to any further extension of the principle of separate electorate or special statutory reservation.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER
10 DOWNING STREET
S.W.1

From a photostat: C.W. 9382. Courtesy: India Office Library

208. LETTER TO MARY OSBORN

November 16, 1931

DEAR SISTER,

I have just read your letter carefully and heartily endorse all you say. You rightly say that we are one with the Universal Spirit. I have found that in order to realize this state we must serve all that lives. This service is possible only if we reduce ourselves to zero. Self-effacement, i.e., self-sacrifice, is the law of life. And lest we feel that it is I who produced a particular result, we must learn to know that no man can ever alone pro-

duce a result. We must therefore work without attaching ourselves to results. Ours is to work, the result is in the hands of God. You seem to be on the right path.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1295

209. MESSAGE TO F. B. FISHER[1]

LONDON,
November 17, 1931

My friends in India, members of the Working Committee of the Congress, have cabled me to return to India, immediately the Conference is over; so I must not go to America. It seems that there is still a long time before I could give any message to America. Perhaps God thinks that, though I would like to meet friends, I have no reason to go to America.

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-11-1931

210. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING[2]

LONDON,
November 17, 1931

MR. GANDHI: Lord Chancellor and fellow Delegates, I know that a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders in having to give the Congress view on this most important question.

I have been sent here with the deliberate intention of exploring every possible avenue to achieve an honourable settlement, whether by open discussion at this table or by private conferences with Ministers and public men who influence public opinion here, and with all those who are interested in questions vitally affecting India. Therefore, I am under obligation not to leave a single stone unturned in order to arrive at a settlement, if only because the Congress is wedded to a policy which is known to you all. The Congress is intent upon reaching its goal at the earliest

[1] The message was conveyed to Bishop Fisher, who was in Chicago, on the telephone.

[2] The subject being considered by the Committee was Defence.

possible moment, and holds also very decided views upon all these matters. What is more to the purpose, it is today, or considers itself today, capable of shouldering all the responsibilities that flow from responsible self-government.

That being the case, I thought that I could not possibly allow the discussion on this most important matter to close without placing, as humbly as I could, and as briefly as I could, the Congress view on the question.

As you are all aware, the Congress case is that there should be complete responsibility transferred to India. That means, and it has been there stated, that there should be complete control over Defence and over External Affairs; but it also contemplates adjustments. I feel that we ought not to deceive ourselves, deceive the world, into thinking that we would be getting responsible government although we may not ask for responsibility in this vital matter. I think that a nation that has no control over her own defence forces and over her external policy is hardly a responsible nation. Defence, its Army, is to a nation the very essence of its existence, and if a nation's defence is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed. This is what our English teachers have taught us times without number, and therefore some Englishmen twitted me also when they heard the talk that we would have responsible government, but we would not have or would not claim control over our own defence forces.

Hence I am here very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the Army, over the Defence forces and over External Affairs. I put in this also so as to avoid having to speak on it when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru speaks on that subject.

To this conclusion we have come with the greatest deliberation. If we do not get this control at the time of embarking upon responsibility, I cannot conceive a time when, because we are enjoying responsibility in other matters, we would be suddenly found fit to control our own defence forces.

I would like this Committee for just a few brief moments to understand what this Army at the present moment means. This Army, in my opinion, whether it is Indian or whether it is British, is really an army of occupation. It does not matter to us, at any rate to me, a bit—I speak from experience—that they are Sikhs or that they are Gurkhas or that they are Pathans or that they are men from Madras or that they are Rajputs; no matter who they are, they are foreigners to me whilst they are in the

Army, controlled by an alien government. I cannot speak to them. Soldiers have come to me stealthily, and have been afraid even of speaking to me, because they felt that they might be reported. It is not possible for us ordinarily to go to the places where the soldiers are kept. They are also taught to regard us not as their countrymen. Unlike any other country in the world, there is absolutely no correspondence between them and the ordinary civil population. This I give as my evidence before this Committee as a man who has endeavoured to come into touch with every part of Indian life, with all those with whom it was possible for me to come into touch and this is not my own personal experience alone, but it is the experience of hundreds and thousands of Congressmen that there is an absolute wall between them and us.

I am therefore quite aware that it is a tremendous thing for us at once to shoulder that responsibility and to have control of this Army, say, less the British soldiers. That is our unfortunate, unhappy position, created for us, I am sorry to have to say, by our rulers.

Then there is the British section of the Indian Army. What is the purpose of this British Army? Every Indian child knows that that British Army is there, including the Indian Army, for the defence of British interests and for avoiding or resisting foreign aggression. I am sorry to have to make these remarks, but that is precisely what I have learned and have experienced, and it would be unjust even to my British friends if I did not give expression to the truth as I have given it and as I hold it. Thirdly, it is an Army intended to suppress rebellion against constituted authority.

These, then, are the main functions of that Army, and hence it does not surprise me that Englishmen should take the view they do. If I were an Englishman, and had also the ambition to rule another nation, I would do precisely the same thing. I would take hold of Indians and train them as soldiers, and I would train them to be loyal to me, so loyal that they would, at my command, shoot anybody I desired them to shoot. Who was it that shot people at Jallianwala Bagh, if it was not their own countrymen? It is therefore not a matter of surprise to me, but it is a fact which stares me in the face.

The existence of the British troops there is also intended to serve this very purpose; it holds the balance between these different Indian soldiers evenly. It undoubtedly protects, as it must, the British officers, and it protects British lives. Again I do not

make any complaint, if I would assume the premise that it was right for Great Britain to occupy India, and that it is right for Great Britain to hold India today and to continue to hold India, no matter under what altered conditions.

That being so, I have no difficulty in answering the question which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would not face and which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also would not face. Both of them said that, not being experts, they were not able to say to what extent this Army could be or should be reduced. I, however, have no such difficulty. I have no difficulty in saying what should happen to this Army; that is to say, I would say emphatically that the whole of this Army should be disbanded, if it does not pass under my control, before I could possibly shoulder the burden of running the government of India under the terrible handicaps under which we are labouring as a legacy of alien rule.

Therefore, that being my fundamental position, I would say that if you British Ministers and British people really wish well by India, if you will transfer power now to us, then regard this as a vital condition, that the Army should pass under our control in its entirety. But then I have told you that, I know the risk that is attendant upon it. That Army will not accept my command. I know that very well. I know that the British Commander-in-Chief will not accept my command; nor would the Sikhs, nor the proud Rajputs—none of them would accept my command. But I expect, even so, to exercise that command with the goodwill of the British people, that they will be there at the time of transferring the command to teach a new lesson to these very soldiers, and to tell them that they are after all serving their own countrymen if they do so. British troops may also be told: 'Now is the time for you not to remain here to protect British interests and British lives, but you are here to protect India against foreign aggression, even against internal insurrection, as if you were defending and serving your own countrymen.'

That is my dream. I know that I shall not realize that dream here. That is what I feel; the evidence that is before me, the evidence of my senses, tells me that I am not going to realize that dream today and here as a result of the deliberations of this Conference. But I should still cherish that dream. It is the dream I should like to cherish up to the end of my time. But, seeing the atmosphere here, I know that I cannot possibly infect British statesmen or the British public with the idea or with the ideal that this should be also their cherished mission. That is how

I would interpret the Prime Minister's declaration; that is how I would interpret Lord Irwin's wishes. It should be the proud privilege and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings whereby we can fly, even as they fly. That is really my ambition, and therefore I say I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of Defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon responsible government although I cannot control my Defence.

After all, India is not a nation which has never known how to defend herself. There is all the material there. There are the Mohammedans, standing in no dread of foreign invasion. The Sikhs will refuse to think that they can be conquered by anybody. The Gurkha, immediately he develops the national mind, will say: 'I alone can defend India.' Then there are the Rajputs, who are supposed to be responsible for a thousand Thermopylaes, and not one little Thermopylae [as] in Greece. That is what the Englishman, Colonel Tod, told us. Colonel Tod has taught us to believe that every pass in Rajputana is a Thermopylae. Do these people stand in need of learning the art of defence?

I assume that, if I shoulder the burden of responsibility, all these people are going to join hands. I am here writhing in agony to see that we have not yet come to terms on the communal question; but whenever the communal settlement comes, it must presuppose that we are going to trust each other. Whether the rule is predominantly Mohammedan or Sikh or Hindu, they will not rule as Hindus or Mohammedans or Sikhs, but they will rule as Indians. If we have distrust of one another, then we want British people there if we do not want to be killed by one another. But then let us not talk of responsible government.

I at least cannot possibly think that we have got responsible government without control of the Army, and therefore I feel deep down at the bottom of my heart that if we are to have responsible government—and the Congress wants responsible government, the Congress has faith in itself, in the masses of the people, and in all those brave military races, and what is more, the Congress has faith also in Englishmen some day doing their duty and transferring complete control to us — we must infect the British with that love for India which would enable her to stand on her own feet. If the British people think that we shall require a century before that can be done, then for that century the Congress will wander in the wilderness, and the Congress must

go through that terrible fiery ordeal, it must go through a storm of distress, misrepresentation and—if it becomes necessary and if it is God's will—a shower of bullets. If this happens, it will be because we cannot trust one another, because Englishmen and Indians have different angles of vision.

That is my fundamental position. I do not want to go into it in detail. I have put this case as forcibly as I am capable of putting it. But if this one thing is admitted, I am resourceful enough to submit and frame safeguard after safeguard which will commend themselves to any unbiased mind, provided that it is common cause that those safeguards must be in the interests of India. But I want to go further and endorse what Lord Irwin said, that although the safeguards in the Pact are stated to be in the interests of India, they must be considered—I believe Lord Irwin used my name, and said that Gandhi also said they must be considered—as in the mutual interests of India and England. I endorse that. I do not conceive a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Great Britain, provided that we contemplate a partnership, a partnership at will, and a partnership on absolutely equal terms. The very reasons that I have given you today for demanding complete control for the Army are also reasons for pleading for, for demanding, control over our External Affairs.

Not being well versed in what is really meant by External Affairs and having to plead my ignorance of what is stated in these Reports of the Round Table Conference on the subject, I asked my friends Mr. Iyengar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to give me a first lesson in what is meant by external affairs and foreign relations. I have got their reply before me. They state that the words mean relations with neighbouring powers, relations with Indian States, relations with other powers in international affairs, relations with the Dominions. If these are external affairs, I think we are quite capable of shouldering the burden and discharging our obligations in connection with External Affairs. We can undoubtedly negotiate terms of peace with our own kith and kin, with our own neighbours, with our own countrymen, the Indian Princes. We can cultivate the friendliest relations with our neighbours the Afghans, and across the seas with the Japanese; and certainly we can negotiate with the Dominions also. If the Dominions will not have our countrymen to live there in perfect self-respect, we can deal with them.

It may be that I am talking out of folly, but you should understand that the Congress has thousands and tens of thous-

ands of foolish men and foolish women like me, and it is on behalf of these that I respectfully register this claim, again saying that, with the safeguards we have conceived, we shall literally fulfil our obligations. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has sketched the safeguards. With much of what he has said I entirely associate myself, but that is not the only solitary safeguard. If Englishmen and Indians put their heads together, sailing in the same direction with no mental reservation whatsoever, it is possible, I submit with every confidence, that we would bring into being safeguards which will be honourable alike to India and to England, and which would be a guarantee for the safety of every British life and the safety of every British interest to which India pledges her honour.

Lord Chancellor, I cannot go further. I tender a thousand apologies for taking up the time of this meeting, but you will understand the feeling that is welling up in me sitting here day after day, and thinking of it day and night, how these deliberations can come to a successful issue. You will understand the feeling which actuates me. It is a feeling of absolute goodwill towards Englishmen, and a feeling of absolute service to my countrymen.

CHAIRMAN: Mr Gandhi, I have listened with very great interest to your appeal, and I want you to be good enough, if you will, to help me personally. I am very much impressed first of all by what you call your dream — I cannot, of course, share your dream—and then I am very much impressed by your ideals. Those I can—perhaps not to the height that you entertain them—share to a very great extent. I am just as anxious to secure peace and happiness in India as you are, and I am just as anxious as you are and as Lord Irwin is to carry out those conditions which he and you arrived at at the beginning of the year, and which, in paragraph 2, read as follows:

> "Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India and discharge of obligations."

I will ask you to assume that I am just as anxious as you are to carry out that programme. I do not doubt your good faith. I ask you not to doubt mine.

You said, in the course of your remarks, that you hoped that we should be able to teach you the lesson of self-defence. (I am only summing up generally some of the matters that you referred to.) Nobody doubts the bravery of your fellow-countrymen. It has been, through the centuries, manifested on

many a stricken field. But supposing it is right, as I think it is, that what you say is correct—namely, that at the present moment the Indians have to learn this lesson of self-defence. I agree with you. I think that is right. Now let me tell you my trouble.

If it is right that at the present moment an Indian Army is not ready for that, you are asking me and you are asking us to take a terrible responsibility when you ask us either to withdraw the Army or to reduce it to such a size as to make it not consistent with safety.

With much of what you say I have the greatest sympathy, but, if you will forgive me for saying so, Mr. Gandhi, the difficulty I feel is the responsibility that I should incur if I were a dictator and said, 'Tomorrow I will withdraw every English soldier.' It would be a terrible risk, and if anything happened to the peace and prosperity of India, I for one could never forgive myself for taking a decision to do that when, upon admission, the lesson has to be learned how Indians can conduct their own defence.

It is because I feel that responsibility that, although I like to share your ideals, I feel it is asking me, at any rate, to go beyond what I really ought to agree to. I agree with you, Mr. Gandhi, that what we have to consider here are the interests of India; but give me at any rate the same credit that I give you when I tell you that honestly I do not think it would be in the interests of India to comply with an immediate request to withdraw the Army. It is a responsibility that I think no statesman who has a real regard for the interests of India—forgive me for putting it in that way—could justify himself in assuming. The time may come, and I hope it will. . . .

MR. GANDHI: May I just correct you? I have not asked for the withdrawal of the British troops. I do not think that there was any sentence in my remarks to that effect, and if I did utter a sentence of that character, I should like to withdraw it.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 387-9

211. SPEECH AT MEETING OF WOMEN'S INDIAN COUNCIL[1]

LONDON,[2]
[*November 18, 1931*]

Gandhiji took the opportunity of correcting various fantastic notions about the women of India and presented a vivid picture of the heroic part they had played during the last struggle. He said:

They are perhaps in many ways superior to you. You had to go through untold suffering to win your suffrage. In India women got it for the asking. No hindrances have been placed in the way of their entering public life and the Congress had not only women for its Presidents, but had Mrs. Naidu as a member of its Cabinet. For several years, and during the last struggle when our organizations were declared illegal and those in charge of them put into prison, it was the women who came to the forefront, took the place of "dictators" and filled the jails. That, however, does not mean that they have not suffered at the hands of men. They have had their bitter cups to drink, but I have no hesitation in telling you that what you have read in Miss Mayo's book about India is 99 per cent untrue. I have read the book from cover to cover and as I finished it I exclaimed that it was verily a drain inspector's report[3]. Some of the things she has said are true, but her generalizations are absolutely false, and several statements in the book are pure figments of her imagination.

He then went on to describe how last year they came out of their homes in one mass and showed an awakening which was miraculous. They took part in processions, defied the law, and bore the lathi, without raising a little finger, without swearing at the police, and used their power of persuasion to wean the drunkard from drink and the sellers and purchasers of foreign cloth from it. It was not a learned woman like Sarojini Naidu but an unlettered woman[4] who had borne lathi blows on her head which bled profusely whilst she stood unflinching, ordering her companions not to move from their posts, and converted

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". The meeting was organized by Agatha Harrison and took place at Morley College.

[2] According to a report in *The Hindustan Times*, 21-11-1931, the meeting took place on this date.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXIV, pp. 539-47.

[4] Gangabehn Vaidya; *vide* Vol. XLV, p. 136.

the little town of Borsad into a Thermopylae. It was to these women that the last year's victory was mainly due.

There was little time for questions, but one or two that were asked were expressive of the anxiety with which they were watching the deliberations of the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji said:

There is yet time for these two countries to remain united on terms of equality for the good of the world. It would not satisfy my soul to gain freedom for India and not to help in the peace of the world. I have the conviction in me that, when England ceases to prey upon India, she will also cease to prey upon other nations. At any rate, India will have no part in the blood guilt.

Young India, 3-12-1931

212. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 19, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I have not troubled you save for sending copy of a cablegram on the situation as it is developing in India.

It is not my intention even now to weary you with a review of the situation there, but there are wild rumours going about in our circles to the effect that martial law in Bengal is imminent; repression on an extensive scale has already commenced there, and that all information about the situation in Bengal is being suppressed by the authorities.

Could you please tell me whether there is the slightest justification for these rumours, and further, what is being actually done by the authorities in Bengal? Also, could I cable to the President of the Congress asking for information about Bengal in the certain hope that the reply that might be sent will not be censored, if it otherwise complies with the Censorship Regulations?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR SAMUEL HOARE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA
INDIA OFFICE, S.W.1

From a photostat: C.W. 9383. Courtesy: India Office Library

213. LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 19, 1931

DEAR SIR PHILIP,

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 17th inst.

I do not propose just now to withdraw the statement[1] I made at the meeting at Chatham House. At the present moment I have not got any time for searching the records to which you are making reference. I, however, promise not to forget the matter, and if I find that I cannot support the statement made by me at Chatham House, I will give my retraction much wider publicity than the Chatham House speech could ever attain.

Meanwhile I am endeavouring to find out the references you want.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR PHILIP HARTOG, K.B.E.
5 INVERNESS GARDENS, W.8

From a photostat: C.W. 9403-a. Courtesy: India Office Library

214. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

LONDON,
November 19, 1931

Not only am I not callous about the Princes joining the Federation, but most anxious that they should do so. So far as

[1] Namely, that the percentage of literacy in India had fallen during the British rule. The addressee had questioned the correctness of the statement. In his letter of November 17 he said he had examined the *Young India* articles and the Punjab Administration report and could find nothing in them to support Gandhiji's contention and had concluded: " . . . may I suggest that you should now withdraw your statement? . . ." *Vide* also "Letter to Sir Philip Hartog", pp. 213-4.

[2] Gandhiji, according to the source, issued the statement to refute the "baseless" report that he had told the Premier in his interview with him that he did not want the Princes to federate.

it lies in me, I should make every effort to induce the Princes to join the Federation.

The Hindu, 20-11-1931

215. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
November 19, 1931

MR. GANDHI: Lord Chancellor and friends, I would like to tender my congratulations to Mr. Benthall on his very temperate statement, and I wish that he could have seen his way not to spoil that admirable statement by importing two sentiments. One sentiment expressed by him was practically that Europeans or Britishers claimed what they are claiming because of their having conferred certain benefits on India. I wish that he could have omitted this opinion, but having expressed it, there should have been no surprise expressed, as was expressed by Lord Reading, that there was a courteous retort from Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, and now, as we have heard, reinforced by Sir Phiroze Sethna. I wish also that he could have omitted the threat that has been used in that statement on behalf of the great corporation that he represents. He said that the European support to the national demand was conditional upon Indian nationalists accepting the demands of the European community expressed by Mr. Benthall, as also, not stated in this statement, but we had it, unfortunately, a few days ago, the separatist tendency expressed in the demand for a separate electorate, and their joining that separatist combination about which it was my painful position to speak the other day. I have endeavoured to study the resolution passed at the last Conference. I want to read that resolution again, although you are familiar with it, because I shall want to say a few things in connection with that resolution:

> At the instance of the British commercial community the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British commercial community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects.

The rest I need not read.

I am extremely sorry, in spite of the great regard and respect I entertain for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, to have to dissent from this sweeping resolution. I was, therefore, delight-

ed yesterday when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru readily admitted that it was vague and that it was susceptible of improvement. You will see the general character of this resolution if you will carefully study it. There is to be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects. If I have interpreted this correctly, I think that it is a terrific thing, and I for one could not possibly commit the Congress to a resolution of this character, much less commit the future Government of India.

There is here no qualification whatsoever. The rights of the British commercial community are to stand on exactly the same footing as those of Indian-born subjects. Therefore, it is not as if there is merely not to be any racial discrimination, or anything of that kind, but here the British commercial community are to enjoy absolutely the same rights as Indian-born subjects. I want to state, with all the emphasis that I can command, that I could not even endorse the formula that the rights of all Indian-born subjects themselves could even be guaranteed as equal. I shall show you the reason presently.

I think that you will readily grant that the future Government of India would be constantly obliged (to use the admirable phrase used just now by Sir Phiroze Sethna) in order to equalize conditions to do what the existing Government has neglected to, namely, continually to discriminate in favour of the famishing Indians against those who have been blest by nature or by the Government themselves with riches and other privileges. It will be necessary for the future Government, perhaps, to provide quarters free for labour, and the monied men of India might say: 'If you provide quarters for them you should give corresponding grants to us, although we do not require quarters of that nature.' It would undoubtedly be discrimination in favour of poor people, and the monied men might then say, according to this formula, that it would be discrimination against them.

I therefore venture to suggest that this sweeping formula cannot possibly be accepted by us in this Conference when we are trying to assist His Majesty's Government — in so far as they will accept our assistance—in shaping the future Constitution of India.

But having said this, I want to associate myself completely with the British merchants and European houses in their legitimate demand that there should be no racial discrimination. I, who had to fight the great South African Government for over

20 years in order to resist their colour bar and their discriminating legislation directed against Indians as such, could be no party to discrimination of that character against the British friends who are at present in India or who may in future seek entry. I speak on behalf of the Congress also. The Congress too holds the same view.

Therefore, instead of this I would suggest a formula somewhat on these lines, a formula for which I had the pleasure and privilege of fighting General Smuts for a number of years. It may be capable of improvement, but I simply suggest this for the consideration of this Committee and especially for the consideration of European friends. "No disqualification not suffered by Indian-born citizens of the State shall be imposed upon any persons lawfully residing in or entering India merely"—I emphasize the word "merely"—"on the ground of race, colour or religion." I think that this is an all-satisfying formula. No Government could possibly go beyond this. I want to deal briefly with the implications of this, and the implications of this are, I am sorry to say, different from the deductions that Lord Reading drew or sought to draw from last year's formula. There would be no discrimination in this formula against a single Britisher or for that matter against a single European as such. I propose here to draw no distinction whatever between Britishers or other Europeans or Americans or Japanese. I would not copy the model of the British Colonies or the British Dominions which have, in my humble opinion, disfigured their Statute-books by importing legislation essentially based upon distinctions of colour and race.

India free, I would love to think, would give a different kind of lesson and set a different kind of example to the whole world. I would not wish India to live a life of complete isolation whereby she would live in water-tight compartments and allow nobody to enter her borders or to trade within her borders. But, having said that, I have in my own mind many things that I would have to do—to repeat that expression—in order to equalize conditions. I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the downtrodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying

privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathize with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.

Look at the condition, if you will, of the untouchables. The law has to come to their assistance and set apart miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; at the present moment they are absolutely living at the mercy of the so-called higher castes, and also, let me say, at the mercy of the State. They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being able to seek the assistance of law. Well, the first act of the Legislature will then be to see that, in order somewhat to equalize conditions, these people are given grants freely.

From whose pockets are these grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans. Will they say that this is discrimination? They will be able to see that this is no discrimination against them because they are Europeans; it will be discrimination against them because they have got money and the others have got no money. It will be, therefore, a battle between the "haves" and the "have-nots"; and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all those classes hold the pistol at the heads of these dumb millions and say: 'You shall not have a Government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights.'

I think I have given sufficiently an indication of what the Congress stands for; of the implications of this formula that I have suggested. On no account will they find that there has been discrimination against them because they are English or because they are Europeans or Japanese or any other race. The grounds that will be applicable to them for discrimination will be also the grounds for discrimination against Indian-born citizens, and, therefore, I have got another formula also, hurriedly drafted because I drafted it here as I was listening to Lord Reading and as I was listening to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The second formula that I have got with me is in connection with existing rights:

> No existing interest legitimately acquired, and not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation in general, shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests.

Here, too, I would explain shortly what I have in mind. I certainly have in mind what you find in the Congress resolution in connection with the taking over by the incoming Government of obligations that are being today discharged by the British Government. Just as we claim that these obligations must be examined by an impartial tribunal before they are taken over by us, so should existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny whenever necessary. There is no question, therefore, of repudiation but merely of taking over under examination, under audit. We have, some of us here, some of us who have made a study of the privileges and the monopolies enjoyed by Europeans, but let it not be merely Europeans, there are Indians—I have undoubtedly several Indians in mind—who are today in possession of land which has been practically given away to them not for any service rendered to the nation but for some service rendered, I cannot even say to the Government, because I do not think that the Government has benefited, but to some official; and if you tell me that these concessions and these privileges are not to be examined by the State, I again tell you that it will be impossible to run the machinery of government on behalf of the "have-nots", on behalf of the dispossessed. Hence you will see here that there is nothing stated in connection with the Europeans. The second formula also is applicable equally to the Europeans as it is applicable to Indians, as it is applicable, say, to Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas and Sir Phiroze Sethna. If they have obtained concessions which have been obtained because they did some service to the officials of the day and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of the Government, I would quickly dispossess them. I would not consider them because they are Indians, and I would just as readily dispossess Sir Hubert Carr or Mr. Benthall, however admirable they are and however friendly they are to me. They may stand me fifty dinners, but they will not stand in the way of my dispossessing them. The law will be no respector of persons whatsoever. I give you that assurance. After having given that assurance, I am unable to go any further. So that is really what is implied by "legitimately acquired"—that every interest must have been taintless, it must be above suspicion, like Caesar's wife, and, therefore, we shall expect to examine all these things when they come under the notice of that Government.

Then you have "not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation". I have in mind certain monopolies, legitimately acquired undoubtedly, but which have been brought into being in conflict with the best interests of the nation. Let me give

you an illustration which will amuse you somewhat, but which is on neutral ground. Take this white elephant which is called New Delhi. Crores have been spent upon it. Suppose that the future Government comes to the conclusion that this white elephant, seeing that we have got it, ought to be turned to some use. Imagine that in Old Delhi there is a plague or cholera going on, and we want hospitals for the poor people. What are we to do? Do you suppose the National Government will be able to build hospitals, and so on? Nothing of the kind. We will take charge of those buildings and put these plague-stricken people in them and use them as hospitals, because I contend that those buildings are in conflict with the best interests of the nation. They do not represent the millions of India. They may be representative of the monied men who are sitting at the table; they may be representative of His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal or of Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas or of Sir Phiroze Sethna or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, but they are not representative of those who lack even anywhere to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to the conclusion that that place is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned, they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed, I may tell you, without any compensation, because, if you want this Government to pay compensation, it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.

I am trying to humour you in order to present this bitter pill, for it is a bitter pill which has got to be swallowed if a Government as Congress conceives it comes into being. I have no desire to deceive you; I have no desire, in order to take away something from here, to deceive you into the belief that everything will be quite all right. I want, on behalf of the Congress, to lay all the cards on the table. I want no mental reservation of any description whatsoever; and then, if the Congress position is acceptable, nothing will please me better, but, if that position is not acceptable, if today I feel I cannot possibly touch your hearts and cannot carry you with me, then the Congress must continue to wander and must continue the process of proselytization until you are all converted and allow the millions of India to feel that at last they have got a National Government.

Up to now, no one has said a word in connection with the two lines which appear at the end of this resolution, namely:

> It was agreed that the existing rights of the European community in India in regard to criminal trials should be maintained.

I must confess that I have not been able to study all the implications of it. I am glad to be able to say that for some days I have been engaged in carrying on friendly—absolutely friendly—and private conversations with Sir Hubert Carr, Mr. Benthall, and some friends. I was discussing this very theme with them and I asked them to tell me what these two things meant and they said it was the same thing for the other communities. I have not ascertained what is the meaning of the same thing for the other communities. It means, I suppose, that the other communities also may demand their own jury. This refers to trial by jury. I am afraid I cannot possibly endorse this formula.

MR. JINNAH: May I correct you, Mr. Gandhi? It refers not only to juries but to the tribunals, the tribunals which will try Europeans and Indians, and there are many other distinctions. It is not merely the jury.

MR. GANDHI: I did not know that. That is why I said I have not studied it. If there is something more, you will pardon my ignorance, but I could not possibly be a party to such reservations. I think that a National Government cannot possibly be shut in by these restrictions. All the communities today who will be the future Indian nation must start with good will, must start with mutual trust or not at all. If we are told that we cannot possibly have responsible government, that will be a state of things one can understand. But we are told there must be all these reservations and safeguards. It would not be liberty and responsible government, but it would be all safeguards. Safeguards would eat away the whole of the Government. I was trying this morning to find something analogous and I came to the conclusion that if all these safeguards are to be granted and all the talk here takes concrete shape and we are told that we are to get responsible government it will be almost on a par with the responsible government that prisoners have in their jails. They too have complete independence immediately the cell door is locked and the jailer goes. The prisoners inside that cell about 10 ft. square or 7 ft. have complete independence. I do not ask for that kind of complete independence, with the jailors safeguarding comfortably their own rights.

Therefore I appeal to our European friends that they should withdraw this idea of safeguarding their rights. I venture to suggest that the two formulae that I have put forward should be adopted. You may cut them about in any manner you like. If the wording is not satisfactory, by all means suggest some other wording. But, outside these formulae of a negative character where-

by there is no bar sinister placed against you, I venture to say you may not—shall I say dare not—ask for more. So much with reference to existing interests and future trade.

Mr. Jayakar was talking yesterday about key industries and I propose to associate myself entirely with the sentiments that he expressed. I do not think that I need take up your time by talking of what importance Congress attaches to key industries. The Congress conception is that, if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of the key industries.

A poor undeveloped country like India is not to be judged as a highly developed individualist island like Great Britain may be. What is good for Great Britain today is, in my opinion, in many respects poison for India. India has got to develop her own economics, her own policy, her own method of dealing with her industries and everything else. Therefore, so far as the key industries are concerned, I am afraid that not merely the Britishers but many will feel that they are not having fair play. But I do not know what is the meaning of "fair play" against a State.

And then about coastal trade too, the Congress undoubtedly has the greatest sympathy with the desire to develop national coastal trade; but, if in the Bill about the coastal trade there is any discrimination against Europeans as such, I will join hands with the Europeans and fight that Bill or the proposal which discriminates against Englishmen because they are Englishmen. But there are the vast interests that have come into being. I have travelled fairly frequently up the great riverways of Bengal and I travelled years ago up the Irawaddy. I know something of that trade. By concessions, privileges, favours, whatever you call them, these huge corporations have built up industries, built up companies and built up a trade which does not admit of any opposition whatsoever.

Some of you may have heard of a budding company between Chittagong and Rangoon. The directors of that company, poor struggling Mohammedans, came to me in Rangoon and asked me if I could do anything. My whole heart went out to them, but there was nothing to be done. What could be done? There is the mighty British India Steam Navigation Company simply underselling this budding company and practically taking the passengers without any passage money at all. I could quote instance after instance of that character. Therefore, it is not because it is a British Company. If it were an Indian company that had usurped

this thing, it would be the same. Supposing an Indian company was taking away capital, as today we have Indians who, instead of investing their capital in India, invest their capital or invest their monies outside India. Imagine that there was a huge Indian corporation that was taking away all its profits and investing them in some other parts of the world, fearing that the National Government was not going along a correct policy, and, therefore, in order to keep their money intact they were taking away that money outside. Go a little step further with me and say that these Indian directors, in order to organize in a most scientific, finished and perfect manner, brought all the European skill that they could bring there and did not allow these struggling corporations to come into being, I would certainly have something to say and have legislation in order to protect the companies like the Chittagong company.

Some friends could not even float their ships along the Irawaddy. They gave me chapter and verse in order to assure me that it became utterly impossible; they could not get their licences, they could not get the ordinary facilities that one is entitled to. Everyone of us knows what money can buy, what prestige can buy, and when such prestige is built up which kills all the saplings, it becomes necessary then to use the expression of Sir John Gorst which he used forty-two years ago—that it then becomes necessary to lop off the tall poppies. Tall poppies ought not to be allowed to crush these saplings. That is really the case on behalf of the coastal trade. It may have been clumsily worded, the Bill. That does not matter, but I think the essence of it is absolutely correct.

About the citizenship, that is the last thing. Well, you have the definition from the Nehru Report. Naturally the Nehru Committee had to consider situations as they arose, and, therefore, there were several changes rung on the original description; but I would like this Committee to realize that the Nehru Report is—I am sorry to have to say it, but it is so—today a back number. Even the late Pandit Motilal Nehru was obliged to say that, not because we wanted to treat the Nehru Report as a back number. The Nehru Report is undoubtedly a compromise between several positions. Though not a member of the Committee, I knew exactly what was happening, because I happened at that time to be in India, to be in touch with the members of the Committee, and, therefore, I know something of the history of that Report and how that Committee also came into being. I am not going to weary you with the details of the history of that Committee, but, as you will see, that Report is based upon the idea

that we were to have Dominion Status. Well, the Congress has taken several strides further. The Congress had to forget that Report in connection with the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh formula, as it has been obliged to forget that Report about many other things. Although the Nehru Report is a creation, or the Nehru Committee is in the first instance a creation, of the Congress, I am not able, therefore, to say that we will be able today to swear by everything that appears there. Beyond that I do not want just now to go.

The definition of "citizen" is a terrific job. I could not possibly undertake on the spur of the moment to present, as I understand the Congress mentality of today, what will commend itself to the Congress or what will commend itself to me. It is, as I say, a matter on which I would like to confer with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other friends and try to understand what is at the back of their minds, because I must confess that out of this discussion I have not been able to reach the heart of the thing. I have made the Congress position absolutely clear, that we do not want any racial discrimination, but after having cleared that position I am not called upon now to give a summary decision for the opinion of the Congress in connection with the definition of the word "citizen". Therefore, I would simply say in connection with the word "citizen" that I reserve my opinion as to the definition entirely for the time being.

Having said this, I want to close with this remark. I do not despair of finding a common formula that would satisfy the European friends. The negotiations in which I was privileged to be a party are, I think, still to continue. If my presence is required, I will still attend that little committee meeting.

The idea is to enlarge it and give it a little less informal shape and find out a common basis.

In spite of what I have said, I do not despair of finding a common formula, but having expressed that hope, I would again hark back to the point that, so far as I can understand it, I cannot think of any detailed scheme which could be incorporated in the Constitution. What can be incorporated in the Constitution is some such formula as this, round which all kinds of rights can arise.

There is no conception here, as you see, of doing anything administratively. I have expressed my own hope in connection with the Federal and Supreme Court. To me the Federal Court is the Supreme Court; it is the final Court of Appeal beyond which there would be no appeal whatsoever; it is my Privy Council and it is

the Palladium of Liberty. It is the Court to which every person who is at all aggrieved can go. A great jurist in the Transvaal —and the Transvaal and South Africa generally have undoubtedly produced very great jurists—to whom I used to go for assistance when I was a youngster, once said to me, in regard to a very difficult case, "Although there may be no hope just now, I tell you that I have guided myself by one thing, or else I should not be a lawyer; the law teaches us lawyers that there is absolutely no wrong for which there is no remedy to be found in a court of law, and if Judges say there is no remedy, then those Judges should be immediately unseated." I say that with all deference to you, Lord Chancellor.

I therefore think that our European friends may rest assured that the future Federal Court will not send them away empty-handed, as we expect to go away empty-handed if we do not have the favour of the Ministers who are the present advisers of His Majesty. I am still hoping that we shall have their ear and get round their better side, and then we may hope to go away with something substantial in our pockets, but, whether we go away with anything substantial in our pockets or not, I hope that, if the Federal Court of my dreams comes into being, then the Europeans and everybody—all the minorities—may rest assured that that Court will not fail them, though a puny individual like myself may fail them.

CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to Mr. Gandhi for that speech. If you will allow me to say so, everybody must be impressed by the earnestness and sincerity with which he advocates his ideals, and I thank him very much indeed. Perhaps he will be good enough to give me those two formulae.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: I should like to ask Mahatma Gandhi to explain one part of his speech, in regard to which there is some doubt in my mind. Does he propose that the National Government of the future should examine and investigate the title to property of everyone, and if so, would it be any title acquired within a certain period of time or not? What is the machinery he proposes to bring into existence for the examination of that title and does he propose to give any compensation at all, or that the National Government should simply expropriate property which, according to his view of the majority, seemed to have been wrongfully acquired?

MR. GANDHI: If you will give me permission, I will certainly answer those questions, which are very legitimate questions. I have really given my view. So far as I understand, it is not intended that the administration should do the things; everything that is done will be above board.

It will be done by legal machinery. All these claims—

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: That is what I want to know. What is that legal machinery to be?

MR. GANDHI: I have not at the present moment thought of any limitation. I think that there is no limitation running against a wrong.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: Under your National Government, therefore, no title in India is safe?

MR. GANDHI: Under our National Government the Court will decide these things, and if there is any undue fear about these things, I think it is possible to satisfy every legitimate doubt. I have no hesitation in saying that generally speaking this is a formula which should be accepted. Where complaints are made that there are illegitimate rights acquired, it should be open to the courts of law to examine those rights. I am not going to say today in taking over the Government that I shall examine no rights whatsoever, no titles that have been acquired.

CHAIRMAN: I think each of you will consider most carefully what the other has said and we will consider what both of you have said.

PANDIT M. M. MALAVIYA: After the very exhaustive speech of the Mahatma Gandhi, I do not propose to detain the Committee very long. I wish to make a few points quite plain. We are all agreed that there shall be no discrimination against Europeans trading in India and no wrong done to them. They shall be dealt with justly and fairly. On that point there is general agreement.

CHAIRMAN: Would you rather continue at our next meeting?

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 425-9

216. LETTER TO W. TUDOR OWEN[1]

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 20, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am likely to be free about 5 p.m. on Wednesday next. I would like you please to telegraph to me if that hour will suit you.

[1] A former official of the Government of India, then guardian of the Maharaja of Bharatpur, a minor

I would be glad to renew old memories, if we can possibly meet.

Yours sincerely,

W. TUDOR OWEN, ESQ.
BROADHURST
LITTLE COMMON
BEXHILL-ON-SEA

From a photostat: S.N. 18328

217. SPEECH AT MEETING OF LONDON VEGETARIAN SOCIETY

LONDON,
November 20, 1931

When I received the invitation to be present at this meeting, I need not tell you how pleased I was, because it revived old memories and recollections of pleasant friendships formed with vegetarians.[1] I feel especially honoured to find on my right Mr. Henry Salt. It was Mr. Salt's book, *A Plea for Vegetarianism*, which showed me why, apart from a hereditary habit, and apart from my adherence to a vow administered to me by my mother, it was right to be a vegetarian. He showed me why it was a moral duty incumbent on vegetarians not to live upon fellow-animals. It is, therefore, a matter of additional pleasure to me that I find Mr. Salt in our midst.

I do not propose to take up your time by giving you my various experiences of vegetarianism, nor do I want to tell you something of the great difficulty that faced me in London itself in remaining staunch to vegetarianism, but I would like to share with you some of the thoughts that have developed in me in connection with vegetarianism. Forty years ago I used to mix freely with vegetarians. There was at that time hardly a vegetarian restaurant in London that I had not visited. I made it a point, out of curiosity, and to study the possibilities of vegetarian restaurants in London, to visit every one of them. Naturally, therefore, I came into close contact with many vegetarians. I found at the tables that largely the conversation turned upon food and disease. I found also that the vegetarians who were struggling to stick to their vegetarianism were finding it difficult from health point of view. I do not know whether, nowadays, you have those debates,

[1] *Vide* Vol. I.

but I used at that time to attend debates that were held between vegetarians and vegetarians, and between vegetarians and non-vegetarians. I remember one such debate, between Dr. Densmore and the late Dr. T. R. Allinson. Then vegetarians had a habit of talking of nothing but food and nothing but disease. I feel that is the worst way of going about the business. I notice also that it is those persons who become vegetarians because they are suffering from some disease or other—that is, from purely the health point of view—it is those persons who largely fall back. I discovered that for remaining staunch to vegetarianism a man requires a moral basis.

For me that was a great discovery in my search after truth. At an early age, in the course of my experiments, I found that a selfish basis would not serve the purpose of taking a man higher and higher along the paths of evolution. What was required was an altruistic purpose. I found also that health was by no means the monopoly of vegetarians. I found many people having no bias one way or the other, and that non-vegetarians were able to show, generally speaking, good health. I found also that several vegetarians found it impossible to remain vegetarians because they had made food a fetish and because they thought that by becoming vegetarians they could eat as much lentils, haricot beans, and cheese as they liked. Of course, those people could not possibly keep their health. Observing along these lines, I saw that a man should eat sparingly and now and then fast. No man or woman really ate sparingly or consumed just that quantity which the body requires and no more. We easily fall a prey to the temptations of the palate, and, therefore, when a thing tastes delicious, we do not mind taking a morsel or two more. But you cannot keep health under those circumstances. Therefore, I discovered that in order to keep health, no matter what you ate, it was necessary to cut down the quantity of your food and reduce the number of meals. Become moderate; err on the side of less, rather than on the side of more. When I invite friends to share their meals with me, I never press them to take anything except only what they require. On the contrary, I tell them not to take a thing if they do not want it.

What I want to bring to your notice is that vegetarians need to be tolerant if they want to convert others to vegetarianism. Adopt a little humility. We should appeal to the moral sense of the people who do not see eye to eye with us. If a vegetarian became ill, and a doctor prescribed beef-tea, then I would not call him a vegetarian. A vegetarian is made of sterner stuff. Why? Because it is for the building of the spirit and not of the body. Man is more than meat. It is the spirit in man for which we are concerned.

Therefore, vegetarians should have that moral basis—that a man was not born a carnivorous animal, but born to live on the fruits and herbs that the earth grows. I know we must all err. I would give up milk if I could but I cannot. I have made that experiment times without number. I could not, after a serious illness, regain my strength unless I went back to milk. That has been the tragedy of my life. But the basis of my vegetarianism is not physical, but moral. If anybody said that I should die if I did not take beef-tea or mutton, even under medical advice, I would prefer death. That is the basis of my vegetarianism. I would love to think that all of us who called ourselves vegetarians should have that basis. There were thousands of meat-eaters who did not stay meat-eaters. There must be a definite reason for our making that change in our lives, for our adopting habits and customs different from society, even though sometimes that change may offend those nearest and dearest to us. Not for the world should you sacrifice a moral principle. Therefore the only basis for having a vegetarian society and proclaiming a vegetarian principle is, and must be, a moral one. I am not to tell you, as I see and wander about the world, that vegetarians, on the whole, enjoy much better health than meat-eaters. I belong to a country which is predominantly vegetarian by habit or necessity. Therefore, I cannot testify that that shows much greater endurance, much greater courage, or much greater exemption from disease. Because it is a peculiar, personal thing. It requires obedience, and scrupulous obedience, to all the laws of hygiene.

Therefore, I think that what vegetarians should do is not to emphasize the physical consequences of vegetarianism, but to explore the moral consequences. While we have not yet forgotten that we share many things in common with the beast, we do not sufficiently realize that there are certain things which differentiate us from the beast. Of course, we have vegetarians in the cow and the bull—which are better vegetarians than we are—but there is something much higher which calls us to vegetarianism. Therefore I thought that during the few minutes which I give myself the privilege of addressing you, I would just emphasize the moral basis of vegetarianism. And I would say that I have found from my own experience, and the experience of thousands of friends and companions, that they find satisfaction, so far as vegetarianism is concerned, from the moral basis they have chosen for sustaining vegetarianism.

In conclusion, I thank you all for coming here and allowing me to see vegetarians face to face. I cannot say I used to meet

you forty or forty-two years ago. I suppose the faces of the London Vegetarian Society have changed. There are very few members who, like Mr. Salt, can claim association with the Society extending over forty years. Lastly, I would like you, if you want to, to ask me any questions, for I am at your disposal for a few minutes.

Mr. Gandhi was then asked to give his reasons for limiting his daily diet to five articles only, and he replied:

That has no connection with vegetarianism. . . . There was another reason. I had been a pampered child of nature. I had acquired then that notoriety that when I was invited by friends, they placed before me ample dishes of food. I told them I had come there to serve, and, personally, I should find myself dying by inches if I allowed myself to be pampered like that. So, in limiting myself to five ingredients of food, I served a double purpose. And I must finish all my eating before sundown. I have been saved many pitfalls by that. There are many discoveries about that in regard to health reasons. Dietists are saying that we are more and more tending towards simplifying diet, and that, if one must live for health one must have one thing at a time and avoid harmful combinations. I like the process of exclusion better than that of inclusion because no two doctors have the same opinion.

Then I think the restriction to five articles of food has helped me morally and materially—materially because, in a poor country like India, it is not always possible to procure goat's milk, and it is a hard thing to produce fruit and grapes. Then, I go to visit poor people, and if I expected hothouse grapes, they would banish me. So, by restricting myself to five articles of food, it also serves the law of economy.

Harijan, 20-2-1949

218. LETTER TO J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 21, 1931

DEAR MR. BOLTON[1],

I was much touched by your letter. I had already seen your letter in the *Times*, and thought it was just the thing. So far as I can see nothing is going to come out of the Conference, when there-

[1] Bolton had been twice in India, and later, in 1934, wrote a book *The Tragedy of Gandhi*.

fore, the struggle revives, many Englishmen and women will be faced with the question whether they can put right before country. I am still making a desperate effort to secure a settlement, and thus avoid conflict which is likely to be more bitter than that of last year.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON, ESQ.
9 KING'S BENCH WALK
E.C. 4

From a photostat: S.N. 18329

219. LETTER TO SIR HENRY LAWRENCE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
S. W. 1,
November 21, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You will pardon this dictated letter. I am so sorry for the misunderstanding that has arisen.[1] I did not want a letter about the Depressed Classes. I personally want to keep the Depressed Classes question as out of the ordinary. It stands on its own plane. But when Mr. Davis brought them in, I did not mind the argument. What I wanted was the briefest letter possible condemning the action of the Englishmen—first of all, in entering into a combination with the other Minorities, and, secondly, in asking for a separate electorate and special reservation at all. I did not even wish to bring in the adult franchise in this connection, because in my opinion adult franchise does not help a very insignificant minority. My argument about the Englishmen was that they should expect to find their way to the Legislatures by an appeal to the common electorate and expect to succeed by right of service. But Mr. Davis thought that no one would look at the proposal without the background of adult suffrage. I could have no objection to that, but I could not possibly write anything myself about a letter which

[1] In a letter of the same date the addressee had said: " . . . Davis telephoned me a message from you asking me to write a letter to the *Times* advocating adult suffrage as an argument in support of your appeal. I drafted such a letter. . . . Mr. Davis then told me that you would write a letter in support of mine, and I journeyed to London to get the two letters accepted by the *Times*. Now he tells me that you decline to write this letter unless I condemn the Europeans who have supported separate electorates. . . . Would you please let me know the true facts of your mind? . . ."

did not make mention of the Englishmen's move. And then too I would have been obliged to be very cautious, for the simple reason that, whilst I am a delegate to the Conference, I do not want to engage in newspaper propaganda. I have avoided it as much as possible. I say my say at the Round Table Conference. If you cannot afford to say anything about the English Combine with the other Minorities, or if you approve of that combine, I can have nothing to say, and I cannot expect you to express any opinion save that of approval of the combine, if an opinion had to be expressed. I wonder if I have made my position quite clear.

Yours sincerely,

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE
BOARS HILLS
OXFORD

From a photostat: S.N. 18332

220. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

LONDON,
[November 22, 1931]

Q. Is the Conference certainly doomed to failure?

A. It is ungrateful to say so. But I see very little warrant for success.

Q. Don't you think the Government having allowed the discussion will now do something? Will the change in the Government make any difference?

A. I expected them to do certainly better, but I do not know that they have made up their minds to transfer power. As regards the two parties, I think for India it is 'six of the one and half a dozen of the other'. In fact, I am rather glad that I have to do with an overwhelmingly large Conservative majority. For I do not want to steal anything from here. I want something large and good which poor people can easily see and understand and so it is best that I have to fight a strong party and win what I want from a strong party. What I want is a lasting thing. I do not want to dissolve the tie, but to transform it. The relationship between India

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". Desai says the questions were put "by the son of a prominent public man". On November 25 *The Hindustan Times* carried a brief report of an interview Gandhiji gave to Randolph Churchill. On November 22 Churchill was acting on behalf of the Hearst Press.

and England, the basis of equal partnership, can exist only if each does the common thing out of a consciousness of strength and not of weakness. And, therefore, I would love to feel that during the Conservative regime we were able to convince the Conservatives that we were not unworthy opponents nor unworthy partners.

Young India, 3-12-1931

221. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 24, 1931

This morning I received the enclosed telegram from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, President of the Congress. It speaks for itself. For quickly understanding the cable, I extend it here below:

> Hijli and Chittagong still unremedied. Indiscriminate arrests under ordinances continuing. Detenus' number approaching one thousand. Daily arrests by scores including many Congress workers. Numerous sedition prosecutions for protesting against Hijli and Chittagong atrocities. Recently there has been repetition of Chittagong on a smaller scale at Dacca, where police openly put innocent men, women and children to great humiliation and indignities. Bengal Europeans persistently demanding more repression. It is generally believed that Government have agreed to this. Widespread resentment prevails driving young men into desperation. You already know U.P. situation. In Andhra several Congress leaders arrested under security or sedition sections, with a view to preventing growing agitation against Krishna and Godavari District Revenue enhancements, despite unanimous opinion Government's own Committee and opposition Legislature. Situation there getting serious. Imamsaheb getting daily temperature, spitting no blood, no cause immediate anxiety.

The last sentence refers to the illness of a friend.

Could I make public use of this cablegram?

THE RT. HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE
INDIA OFFICE, S.W. 1

From a photostat: S.N. 18339

222. INTERVIEW TO "ECHO DE PARIS"

[*November 24, 1931*][1]

Emphasizing his refusal to accept anything less than complete Home Rule, Mahatma Gandhi said that he would re-commence the struggle if the Round Table Conference broke down. He expected all leaders to be arrested successively, but the Nationalist Movement would continue.

The Hindustan Times, 26-11-1931

223. NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL[2]

[*November 25, 1931*][3]

Could you manage 9.30 p.m. tonight?

From a photostat: G.N. 2188-8

224. INTERVIEW TO "NEW LEADER"

LONDON,
[*November 25, 1931*][4]

Q. Is it possible for you to speak about what developments are likely in India if the Conference breaks down?

A. Not in detail. As I sense the future now, there will be a revival of trouble in its intensest form.

Q. But do you think you will be able to renew the psychology of resistance? When a movement is called off, is it not always more difficult to renew it?

[1] From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25-11-1931, which also carried a report of the interview.

[2] This was in answer to an enquiry from the addressee for a time when he and Dr. Ambedkar could see Gandhiji.

[3] According to "Diary, 1931", Gandhiji met Mirza Ismail and Ambedkar on this date.

[4] The date is from *The Hindustan Times*, 28-11-1931, which carried a brief report of the interview. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28-11-1931, also reported the interview.

A. I have no doubt whatever about it. I have never found it difficult to renew a movement which I have called off. But I must feel the strength within. My friends were nervous when we finished at Bardoli in 1922,[1] and then renewed the struggle in 1930. But it was just the right time. And the suspension proved to be good. During the intervening years we were not idle. The people were imbibing our ideas. Our constructive work went on, and it told on the masses who assimilated the meaning and spirit of the movement, and there was a very wonderful response.

Q. I see that Jawaharlal Nehru is saying that it is difficult to keep back the people now.

A. That is all to the good. I can say in the plainest possible manner that I should not like to start the struggle if there were no spontaneous feeling among the people. But even at this distance, I am conscious that the people are absolutely ready. They are only waiting for the signal.

Q. Is that the case with the peasants as well as with the population in the towns?

A. Yes. I have to depend more and more on the peasants.

Q. Do they take part in the movement principally from economic or political motives?

A. Their economic difficulties have given them a grasp of the political situation. They understand that their economic position will not be better until the present political system is destroyed, root and branch. The Government in India has become the protector of the rich. There seems to be a conspiracy of the rich behind the Government to get every pice they can from the poor. The position of the peasants cannot be improved until the cruel burden of taxation which they have to bear is removed.

Q. In the struggle at the beginning of this year, South India seemed to be weak. Do you think you can count on South India this time?

A. South India gave its share steadily in the last struggle, and was coming forward splendidly when the civil disobedience campaign was suspended. It will come forward again when the struggle is renewed. South India is like that. It moves more slowly, but it is sound. I did not lose faith in the South before. In the making of khaddar the South has done the best, and its

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXII.

work among the untouchables has been solid. . . . But I cannot say which province will be best this time. I have faith in all the provinces.

Q. Have you any fear that the impatience in India may prevent you from maintaining the movement on non-violent lines?

A. No, I think not. If the people continue to respond and the mass character of the movement is maintained, violence will play no part.

Q. I don't want to embarrass you, but I cannot escape the conviction that some of the Muslims at the Round Table Conference have been more concerned about their communal claims than about Indian self-government.

A. I would not say that. I would say that their predominant concern is the guarding of what they consider to be the rights of Islam in India. That certainly occupies a very important place in their minds. But one has to say the same of the communal claims of the three sections: the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs.

Q. Do you regard the communal "representatives" at the Conference as in fact representative, or would you say that the larger part of their communities are behind Congress?

A. Undoubtedly they are behind Congress. Otherwise, Congress could not do its work. We have had the hearty support of both Sikhs and Muslims. There are five Muslims on the Congress Working Committee. And they are not non-entities. They are really representative Muslim leaders.

Q. Would you say that the National Muslim Party (which supports Congress) is more representative than most of the Muslim "leaders" at the Conference?

A. Certainly. That is what Dr. Ansari, who is on our Working Committee, is always claiming. It may not be so true, perhaps, as Dr. Ansari thinks, but it is becoming truer day by day. There is no doubt whatever that it is true of the younger generation, which is turning from sectarianism.

Q. Is this tendency in the younger generation a revolt against sectarianism only, or is it a revolt against religion itself?

A. It is difficult to say. I am not able to say that they are agnostics and atheists. I can only say that they have developed the spirit of toleration. Whether that signifies less appreciation of Islam and a waning of the religious instinct, I do not know.

Q. If the Round Table Conference breaks down on the issue of responsible government at the Centre, do you think there will be a repetition of the united opposition, which was given to the Simon Commission?

A. Yes, I think so. The Liberals and Moderates will not join the direct action movement, but their opinions will be entirely on the Congress side.

Q. Do you see any possibility of agreement with the British Government on the basis of self-government in the Provinces?

A. No. I suggested a formula, but the British Government would not accept it. There might be a possibility of agreement if the Provinces were given real control immediately and if an absolute guarantee were given of early Central responsibility. I would accept an interval in point of time, but not in legislation. The same legislation must deal with the two things. Indian Nationalists will not look at Provincial autonomy without the certainty of Central responsibility. They say they have waited a long time for complete independence, and they can wait a little longer rather than accept a compromise which withholds Central reponsibility.

Q. What is your view of Mr. Brailsford's suggestion of complete Provincial autonomy, with provision for a national constituent assembly to settle the issue of the form of Central Government.

A. Only a guarantee of responsible government under statutory provision would do. We must have responsible government.

The Hindustan Times, 14-12-1931

225. SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 25, 1931

My Lord Chancellor, I tender my congratulations to Mr. Lees-Smith for being responsible for this debate, and I tender my congratulations to you, My Lord Chancellor, for having allowed this debate. I think that Mr. Lees-Smith has shown amazing optimism in initiating this debate. He has come as a physician with an oxygen pump and he is trying to pump oxygen into a dying body. I do not say that we are a dying body because of this rumour or threat of Provincial autonomy divorced from Central responsibility. In my own humble manner, almost

from the commencement of these proceedings, I have been uttering words of warning and I was oppressed, and I said so in so many words, with a sense of unreality which dawned upon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru only yesterday, or as I happen to know, has been dawning upon him for the last few days, because he has given me the privilege of taking me into his confidence in common with his other friends and comrades, if I can also bracket myself as one of his comrades. Out of his ripe experience of administrative affairs, having held high offices in the Government, he has warned us of the danger of Provincial autonomy so-called. I am very often an unrepentant sinner. He had reasons for issuing this warning, especially in connection with me, because I had dared to discuss the question of Provincial autonomy with many English friends who are responsible public men in this country, and he had heard of it, and so he gave me ample warning. It was for that reason that you find me as one of the co-signatories not to the document that has been placed before you, My Lord Chancellor, but to another similar document that was issued to the Press about ten days ago and was addressed to the Prime Minister. I told him, as I say here, that both he and the others who have spoken after him and I reached the same goal through different routes. Fools walk in where angels fear to tread. Not having had any experience of administration actually, I felt that, if Provincial autonomy was the Provincial autonomy of my conception, I for one would not mind handling the fruit, feeling the thing and seeing whether it really answered my purpose. I love to meet friends, who may be opponents in policy, on their own platform and find out their difficulties, and find out also whether what they are offering is likely to lead one to the same place, and in that spirit and in that sense I ventured to discuss Provincial autonomy, but I found at once on discussion that what they meant was certainly not the Provincial autonomy that I meant, and so I told my friends also that I would be quite safe if they left me alone, that I was not going to sell the interests of the country out of a foolish conception of Provincial autonomy, or out of impatience to get something for the country. What I am anxious to do is, having come all these miles with the greatest diffidence, having come here to tender my whole-hearted co-operation to the Government and to this Conference, without the slightest mental reservation, and having applied that spirit of co-operation in thought, word and deed, to leave nothing undone, I have not hesitated even to go into the danger zone, and hence I have dared to talk about and discuss Provincial autonomy. But I

have come to the conclusion that you, or the British Ministers, do not contemplate giving India that measure of Provincial autonomy which would satisfy a man of my mentality, which would satisfy the Congress, and which would reconcile the Congress to taking up Provincial autonomy although there may be delay in getting responsibility at the Centre.

At the risk of taking up a little of the time of this meeting, let me make my meaning clear, because here too I am adopting a somewhat different line of argument, and I am most anxious not to be misunderstood. Let me take, therefore, one illustration. I want to take for my illustration Bengal, because it is one of the Provinces today in India which is deeply affected. I know that there is a terrorist school active in Bengal. Everybody ought to realize by this time that I can have no manner of sympathy with that terrorist school in any shape or form. I am as convinced as I have ever been that terrorism is the worst kind of action that any reformer can take up. Terrorism is the very worst thing for India in a special manner, because India is a foreign soil for terrorism to flourish in. I am convinced that those young Indians who are giving their lives for what they consider to be a good cause are simply throwing away their lives, and that they are not bringing the country by one inch nearer to the goal which is common, I hope, to us all.

I am convinced of all these things, but, having been convinced of them, supposing that Bengal had Provincial autonomy today, what would Bengal do? Bengal would set free every one of the detenus. Bengal would not hunt down the terrorists—an autonomous Bengal, I mean—but Bengal would try to reach these terrorists and convert these terrorists, and I should approach them with every confidence and wipe out terrorism from Bengal.

But let me go a little step further, in order to drive home the truth that is in me. If Bengal was autonomous, that autonomy itself would really remove terrorism from Bengal, because these terrorists foolishly consider that their action is the shortest cut to freedom; but, having attained that freedom, the terrorism would cease.

Today there are a thousand young men, some of whom, I would dare swear, have absolutely nothing in common with the school of terrorism, a thousand young men who have not been tried and who have not been convicted; they have all, every one of them, been arrested on suspicion. So far as Chittagong is concerned, Mr. Sen Gupta, who was Lord Mayor of Calcutta, who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, and who

was also President of the Provincial Congress Committee in Bengal, is here today. He has brought to me a report signed by members of all the parties in Bengal in connection with Chittagong, and it is sad reading. It is painful to read this report, but the substance of this report is that there has been an inferior edition of the Black and Tans in Chittagong—and Chittagong is not a place of no importance on the map of India.

We now see there has been a flag-showing ceremony, and in making this demonstration all the military forces have been concentrated together in Calcutta, and these demonstrations have gone through ten streets of Calcutta. At whose expense, and what will it do? Will it frighten the terrorists? I promise you it will not frighten the terrorists. Will it then wean the Congressmen from civil disobedience? It will not do so. The Congressmen are pledged to this thing. Suffering is the badge of their tribe. They have determined to go through every form of suffering. It cannot, therefore, frighten them. Our children would laugh at this show, and it is our purpose to show the children that they must not be terrified, they must not be frightened by this display of artillery, guns, air force, and so on.

So you see what is my conception of Provincial autonomy. All these things would be impossible; I would not allow a single soldier to enter the Province of Bengal; I would not pay a single farthing for the upkeep of an army which I may not command. In such Provincial autonomy you do not contemplate a state in Bengal whereby I can set free all these detenus and I can remove from the statute-book the Bengal Regulation III. If it is Provincial autonomy, then it is independence for Bengal precisely in the same manner as that responsible Government I have seen growing up in Natal. That is a little colony, but it had its own independent existence; it had its own volunteer force and so on. You do not contemplate that thing for Bengal or any of these Provinces. It will be the Centre still dictating, still ruling, still doing all these things. That is not the Provincial autonomy of my conception. That was why I said, if you present me with that live Provincial autonomy, I shall be prepared to consider that proposition; but I am also convinced that that autonomy is not coming. If that autonomy was coming, we would not see all these protracted proceedings that have taken place here; then we would have managed our own affairs in an entirely different manner.

But what really grieves me still more is this: We have all been brought here with one single purpose. I have been brought here specially through that very pact in which it is

written that I was coming here to discuss and to receive real responsibility at the Centre: Federation with all its responsibility —safeguards undoubtedly — safeguards in the interests of India. I have said in season and out of season that I would consider every safeguard that is necessary. I personally do not really consider, with Mr. Lees-Smith or anybody, that all this Constitution-building should take all these long years—three years. He thinks of Provincial autonomy in eighteen months. My folly tells me that all this time is not necessary. Where the people have made up their minds, the Parliament has made up its mind, the Ministers have made up their minds and the public opinion here is ready, then these things do not take time. I have seen them not taking time where there has been one mind applied; but I do know that there is not one mind applied, but there are many minds, all following their own course and all perhaps with a disruptive tendency. That being so, I feel convinced that, in spite of this debate, not only is there going to be no responsibility at the Centre, but no tangible result coming out of this Conference. It hurts me, it pains me, that all this precious time of British Ministers, of the nation and of all these Indians who have come here, all of us, should have been wasted; but I am very much afraid that, in spite of this oxygen pump, the result will be nil.

I do not say that the result is, therefore, bound to be that Provincial autonomy will be thrust down our throats. I do not really fear that result. What I fear is something still more dreadful—that nothing at all is going to come out of this thing but terrible repression in India. I do not mind that repression; repression will only do us good. If we have repression in the right time, I will consider that also as a very fine outcome from this Conference. Repression has never done harm to a single nation which is sailing for her destined goal with a fixed determination, for that repression is really an oxygen draught, though not the draught that Mr. Lees-Smith has administered.

But what I fear is that the slender thread which I had again built up of co-operation with the British nation and with British Ministers is about to snap and that I should again declare myself a convinced non-co-operator and civil resister — that I should re-deliver this message of non-co-operation and civil resistance to the millions of India, no matter how many air balloons will float over India or how many tanks will be brought to India. They will have no result. You do not know today that they produce no results even upon the tender young children. We teach them to dance with joy when bullets are flying about them—they are like

so many crackers. We teach them to suffer for the freedom of their country. I do not despair. I do not think that because nothing happens here there will be chaos in the land. I do not think so. Not so long as Congress remains untarnished and non-violence goes forward throughout the length and breadth of India undiminished.

I have been told so often that it is the Congress that is responsible for this terrorism. I take this opportunity of denying that with all the strength at my command. On the contrary, I have evidence to show that it is the Congress creed of non-violence which up to now has kept the forces of terrorism in check. We have not succeeded to the fullest extent—I am sorry—but as time goes on we hope to succeed. It is not as if this terrorism can bring freedom to India. I wanted freedom precisely of the same type, only fuller, as Mr. Jayakar. I want full freedom for the masses, and I know that terrorism can do no good to the masses. The masses are silent and disarmed. They do not know how to kill. I do not talk of individual instances, but the masses of India have never moved in that direction.

Wanting that freedom for the masses, I know that this terrorism can do no good whatsoever. Whilst on the one hand Congress will fight British authority and its terrorism, legalized, so also will Congress fight terrorism, illegal, on the part of youth. Between these two what I feel is that there was this course of co-operation opened up for the British nation and for me by Lord Irwin. He had built this bridge, and I thought I was going to have a safe passage. I had a safe passage, I have come here, and I have come here to tender my co-operation. But I must confess to you that, apart even from what Mr. Lees-Smith has said, and from what has been said on this side by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and by Mr. Sastri and the other speakers, the limited responsibility at the Centre which they have in view would not satisfy me.

I want that responsibility at the Centre that will give me, as you all know, control of the Army and Finance. I know I am not going to get that here now, and I know there is not a British man ready for that, and, therefore, I know I must go back and yet invite the nation to a course of suffering. I have taken part in this debate because I wanted to make my position absolutely clear. What I have been saying to friends in private sitting-rooms with reference to Provincial autonomy I have now said openly at this table, and I have told you what I mean by Provincial autonomy and what would really satisfy me. I close by saying that I sail in the same boat as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others, and

I feel convinced that real Provincial autonomy is an impossibility unless there is responsibility at the Centre, or unless you are prepared to so weaken the Centre that the Provinces will be able to dictate to the Centre. I know that you are not prepared to-day to do this. I know that this Conference does not conceive a weak Centre when this Federal Government is brought into being, but that it conceives a strong Centre.

A strong Centre governed and administered by an alien authority, and a strong autonomy, are a contradiction in terms. Hence I feel that Provincial autonomy and Central responsibility have really speaking to go together. But I say again that I have an open mind. If somebody will convince me that there is Provincial autonomy, such as I have conceived, for instance, for Bengal, available, I would grasp it.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 453-4

226. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 25, 1931

My Lord[1], I followed your speech yesterday on this very important subject with the greatest attention and with all the respect that is undoubtedly your due, and in connection with that speech I read the paragraphs on Finance in the Federal Structure Committee's Report of last year, I think it is pragraphs 18, 19 and 20, and I regret to have to record my opinion that I cannot endorse the restrictions that have been suggested in these paragraphs. My position, and, I think the position of all of us, must be very difficult when we do not know exactly what are the financial burdens.

Let me explain. I would naturally have to consider the thing from one point of view if 'Army' was reserved subject, and another point of view if 'Army' was a transferred subject. I have also very great difficulty in expressing my view by reason of the fact that the Congress is emphatically of opinion that the obligation to be taken over by the incoming Government should be subject to audit and impartial examination.

[1] Lord Reading. He had taken the chair when Lord Sankey left.

I have in my hands a Report prepared by four impartial men, two of them ex-Advocates-General of the Bombay High Court: I mean, Mr. Bahadurji and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai. The third examiner or member of the Committee is Professor Shah[1], for a long time Professor in the University of Bombay, a man having an all-India reputation and author of valuable works on Indian economics. The fourth member of the Committee is Mr. Kumarappa[2], who holds European degrees and whose opinions on Finance command considerable acceptance and influence. These four gentlemen have submitted an elaborate Report in which they, as I hold, make out a conclusive case for an impartial enquiry, and they show that many of the obligations do not really belong to India.

In this connection, I want very respectfully to say that the Congress has never suggested, as it has been viciously suggested against it, that one single farthing of national obligations should ever be repudiated by the Congress. What the Congress has, however, suggested is that some of the obligations which are supposed to belong to India ought not to be saddled upon India and should be taken over by Great Britain. You will find in these volumes a critical examination of all these obligations. I do not propose to weary this Committee with a recital of these things. Those who would care to study these two volumes may, and I have no doubt will, study them with considerable profit, and they will perhaps discover that some of these obligations should never have been saddled upon India. That being the case, I feel that if one knew exactly where one was, it would be possible to give a decisive opinion, but subject to that, I venture to suggest, that the restrictions, or the so-called safeguards, that have been suggested in paragraph 18,19 and 20 of this Report of the Federal Structure Sub-committee will, instead of helping India on her course, hinder her progress at every step.

You, My Lord, were pleased yesterday to say that the question before you was not one of want of confidence in Indian Ministers. On the contrary, you had every hope that the Indian Ministers would do as well as any other Ministers, but you were concerned with the credit of India outside the borders of India, that the investors who supplied capital to India and who brought their money to India at reasonable rates of interest would not be satisfied if there were not safeguards of the type suggested

[1] Prof. K. T. Shah
[2] J. C. Kumarappa

here; and you went on futher, if I remember rightly, to say that when there were any investments in India from here, or when there were any monies sent to India, it was not to be supposed that they were not also for the interest of India.

If I remember rightly, Your Lordship used the words "obviously it was in the interests of India". I was really waiting to find some illustrations, but no doubt you took it for granted that we would know those matters or those illustrations which you had in mind. I had really converse illustrations in mind while you were speaking, and I said to myself, I have within my own experience several illustrations where I could show that the interests of India were not, in those particular illustrations, identical with the interests of Great Britain, that the two were in conflict, and that, therefore, we could not possibly say that every time there were loans from Great Britain, they were in the interest of India.

Take for instance so many wars. Take the wars of Afghanistan. As a young man I read with great avidity the history of wars in Afghanistan written by the late Sir John Kay and I have a vivid recollection left on my mind that most of these wars were certainly not in the interests of India; and not only that, but that the Governor-General had bungled over these wars. The late Dadabhai Naoroji taught us young men that the history of British Finance in India was a history of muddle and bungling where it was not also one of exploitation of India.

The Lord Chancellor uttered the warning, and you were pleased to enforce his warning, that Finance at the present moment was a very delicate matter and that, therefore, those of us who took part in the discussion should be cautious and careful so as not to mishandle the subject and create difficulties or add to the difficulties that already face the Finance Minister in India. I, therefore, do not propose to go into any details; but I cannot help saying one thing in connection with this increase in the ratio. I mean when the rupee was appreciated to 1/6 from 1/4. Now, there the measure was adopted in the face of almost unanimous opposition from Indians—Indians who were not in any way connected with the Congress. They were all independent, some of them great experts in finance who knew exactly what they were saying. Now, there again one finds that the Indian interest was really subordinated to foreign interest. It does not require an expert to know that a depreciated rupee is always, or as a rule would be, in the interest of the cultivators. I was very much struck by an admission made by two financiers here that, if the rupee, instead of being linked to sterling, had been left to itself,

at least for the time being, it would have been of great advantage to the cultivators. They were going to the last extreme and thinking of some catastrophe that might befall India if the rupee left to itself went down to the intrinsic value, namely 6d. or 7d. Personally, I have not even then been able to see that really the Indian cultivator would be in any shape or form damaged.

Now, that being the case, I cannot possibly endorse safeguards that would interfere with the full discharge of his responsibility by the Indian Finance Minister, and that responsibility conceived predominantly in the interests of the ryots.

But I want to draw the attention of this Committee to one thing more. In spite of the caution uttered by the Lord Chancellor and you, My Lord, I feel somehow or other that if Indian Finance was properly managed entirely in the interests of India, we should not be subject to fluctuations as seriously as we are today in the foreign market, the fluctuations in London. I want to give you my reason for it. When I first became acquainted with the writing of Sir Daniel Hamilton, I approached him with considerable diffidence and hesitation. I knew nothing practically of Indian Finance, I was absolutely new to the subject, but he with his zeal insisted upon my studying the papers that he continued to send me. As we all know, he has large interests in India, he has himself held offices of importance and is himself an able financier. He is today making experiments himself along the lines he has suggested, but this is the one striking thought that he has placed before all who would care to understand his mode of looking at Indian finance, and he says that India does not need to look to the gold standard or to the silver standard or to any metallic standard. India has metal all its own, and he says that that consists in her innumerable, countless millions of labourers. It is true that the British Government has not declared itself insolvent in connection with Indian Finance, that it has been, up to now, able to pay its way; but at what cost? It has been, in my humble opinion, at the cost of the cultivator, the money has been squeezed from the cultivator. Instead of thinking in terms of rupees, if the authorities had consulted and thought of finance in terms of these masses, they could have managed the affairs of India, in my humble opinion, infinitely better than they have hitherto done, they would not then have been obliged to fall back upon foreign market. Everybody recognizes, British financiers have told us, that for nine years out of ten India has always a favourable balance.

That is to say, whenever India has what may be called an eight-anna or ten-anna year, eight annas is really enough to

give her a favourable balance. Then India produces through bountiful Nature, from Mother Earth, more than enough to pay for all her obligations, and more than for all the imports that she may ever require. If it is true, and I hold that it is true, a country like India does not really need to fall back upon the foreign capitalist. She has been made to fall back upon the foreign capitalist because of the enormous drain that has taken place from India in order to pay what are called the home charges, in order to pay terrific charges for India's Defence. She is utterly unable to discharge these obligations, and yet they have been met by a revenue policy which has been condemned in unmeasured terms by one of the officiating commissioners, the late Romesh Chandra Dutt. I know he engaged in a contoversy with the late Lord Curzon on this very topic, and we Indians came to the conclusion that the right was on the side of the late Romesh Chandra Dutt.

But I want to go a step further. It is known that these millions of cultivators remain idle for six months in the year. If the British Government saw to it that these men would not remain idle for six months in the year, imagine the wealth that they would produce. Why would we then need ever to fall back upon the foreign market? That is how the whole idea of finance appears before me, a layman—a man who continually thinks of these masses and wants to feel as they would feel. They would say: 'We have all the labour; we do not want, therefore, to fall back upon any foreign capital.' So long as we labour, the whole world would want the products of our labour. And it is true the world today wants the products of our labour. We would be able to produce those things that the world would voluntarily and willingly take from us. That has been the condition of India for ages past. Therefore, I really do not feel the fear that you, My Lord, have expressed in connection with Indian Finance. Having these views, I do not really share the fear that Indian Finance would be in jeopardy if we whispered something that need not be said now, or if a man like me said today that I would want complete control of Indian Finance if India is to have responsibility at the Centre. In my opinion, unless we have control over our own door-keepers and over our own purse absolutely unrestricted, we shall not be able to shoulder the responsibility, and it will not be a responsibility worth the name.

Holding this view, I feel that the safeguards that I would suggest are of a totally different character; but I am not in a position at the present moment to suggest any safeguard at all—not until

I know that the nation is to have complete responsibility, complete control over her Army, over the Civil Service, that the nation will be at perfect liberty to take over so many of the Civilians as the nation would want, so many of the soldiers as the nation would want and on terms that would be suitable for a poor nation like India. Unless I know all these things, it is practically impossible for me to suggest the safeguards. As a matter of fact, when all these things are taken into consideration, probably there will be no necessity for any safeguards, unless one starts with want of confidence in India's ability to shoulder her burden and India's ability to carry on the administration of the country in a peaceful manner. The only danger under such circumstances that I can possibly conceive would be that the moment we take charge there would be utter chaos and disorder. Now, if that is the fear that seizes the British mind, then there is no meeting ground. We take responsibility, we ask for responsibility, we demand responsibility, because we have got that confidence that we would be able to carry on our affairs in a decent manner and, I would feel, certainly in a much better manner than British administrators have done or could ever do — not because they are not able. I will grant that they are much abler than we are; I will grant that they have got an organizing capacity which we have to learn at their feet. But we have one thing, that we know our country, we know our people and we should, therefore, be able to run our Government cheaply. We would avoid all the quarrels, and we, not having any imperialistic ambition, would not go to war with the Afghans or any other nation, but we would cultivate friendly relations, and they would have nothing to fear from us.

That is the kind of idea that runs through my mind as I conceive Indian Finance. You will see, therefore, that, in my opinion, Indian Finance does not occupy such a large place in my conception, and not such a dangerous position as it evidently occupies in your mind, or the Lord Chancellor's mind or in the minds of British Ministers with whom I had the privilege of discussing this question. Hence, and for the reasons that I have explained, I must respectfully say that it is not possible for me to subscribe to the safeguards that are suggested here, or to endorse the fears that agitate the British public or the responsible men in Great Britain.

One thing I would like to say: that for every obligation that the National Government undertakes there will be proper guarantees, such guarantees as a nation can possibly give, forthcoming, and assurances of a right type forthcoming. But, in my opinion,

they will never be of the type or the character described in these paragraphs. After all, if there are, and there would be, I have no doubt, certain obligations that we would have to take over and we have to discharge towards Great Britain, supposing that we bungled and did not do anything whatsoever, no assurances given on paper would be worth anything. Or supposing that India, when she comes into her own, unfortunately for her has a series of bad seasons, then again I do not know that any safeguards that might possibly be conceived would be enough to squeeze money out of India. In these critical circumstances—unforeseen circumstances, visitations of nature—, it is impossible for any national Government to give guarantees.

I do not wish to labour this point any further. I thought that I should occupy a few minutes of this Committee in disburdening myself of the views that a layman like myself holds upon Indian Finance.

I can only close with the great sorrow that has overtaken me in connection with these things that I should find myself in conflict with so many administrators who have experience of Indian affairs and also of so many of my countrymen who are attending this Round Table Conference; but, if I am to discharge my duty as a representative of the Congress, even at the risk of incurring displeasure I must give expression to the views I hold in common with so many members of the Congress.

CHAIRMAN: I did not want to interrupt you, Mr. Gandhi, when you were speaking, but I do not think that you quite accurately represented what I had said. Obviously I could not interrupt you, because it meant going back and repeating what has been said, and, after all, it stands recorded. It may be a misinterpretation of some observations that were made, and of course there are many economic and financial matters which you have raised which have not been discussed at all. I only want to say in reference to them that you have introduced them for the purpose of your argument. All I want to say is that I have already given in the speeches that I have made with regard to finance, but I did not want it to be assumed that there is no answer to it.

GANDHIJI: Of course not.

Young India, 17-12-1931; also *Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee*, Vol. I, pp. 459-60

227. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
November 26, 1931

CHAIRMAN : Will you please take the draft report in your hands. I do not think it will take very long, because what I have done is that I have asked various members to let me have their views and I have incorporated them. I will just read it through in the way we usually do and then come back to each paragraph. It is the fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee, on Commercial Discrimination.

1. On this subject the Committee are glad to be able to record a substantial measure of agreement. They recall that, in paragraph 22 of their Report at the last Conference, it was stated that there was general agreement that in matters of trade and commerce the principle of equality of treatment ought to be established and that the Committee of the whole Conference, at their meeting on January 19th, 1931, adopted the following paragraph as part of the Report of the Minorities Subcommittee:

"At the instance of the British Commercial community, the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India, and the rights of Indian-born subjects, and that an appropriate Convention based on reciprocity should be entered into for the purpose of regulating these rights."

More than one member in the course of the discussion also reminded the Committee that the All-Parties' Conference in 1928 stated in their Report that "it is inconceivable that there can be any discriminating legislation against any community doing business lawfully in India."

2. The Committee accept and reaffirm the principle that equal rights and equal opportunities should be afforded to those lawfully engaged in commerce and industry within the territory of the Federation, and such differences as have manifested themselves are mainly (though not entirely) concerned with the limits within which the principle should operate and the best method of giving effect to it. . . .

MR. GANDHI : I should like this added, Lord Chancellor, at the end of that paragraph:

"Some, however, contend that the future Government should not be burdened with any restraint, save that no dis-

crimination should be made merely on the ground of race, colour or creed."

CHAIRMAN: I will certainly put that in. Where do you want that to go?

MR. GANDHI: At the end of the second paragraph.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 472-4

228. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*[1]

LONDON,
November 27, 1931

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gandhi has something that he wants to add at the end of paragraph 2.

MR. GANDHI. I wish to add at the end of paragraph 2,[2] after the words "responsible government" the words, "and that the derogation from complete control would hamper the Finance Minister in the discharge of his duty."

CHAIRMAN: Those words are noted.[3]

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 483

[1] The Committee were continuing discussion on the Draft Fourth Report dealing with Financial Safeguards.

[2] The paragraph ended: ". . . some members again . . . went further in their objection to the financial safeguards, and expressed themselves as unwilling to contemplate any limitations upon the powers of an Indian Finance Minister to administer his charge in full responsibility to the Legislature, on the ground that a constitution which did not concede complete control of finance to the Legislature could not be described as responsible government."

[3] They were incorporated in the amended version of the Report.

229. CABLE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

[*November 28, 1931*][1]

LEAVING SATURDAY REACHING VILLENEUVE SUNDAY. THERE TILL ELEVENTH. SAILING VENICE CRACOVIA TWELFTH.[2]

Young India, 3-12-1931

230. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY SESSION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

LONDON,
November 28, 1931

SIR HUBERT CARR: Lord Chancellor, during the past week or ten days we have heard a good deal regarding the alleged failure of the Conference, and I am glad to have this opportunity to express the view of my colleagues and myself, which is very emphatically opposed to that description. We feel that the deliberations extending over the past year have led to a very remarkable degree of agreement on many questions of vital importance to the future of India. In holding this view, we do not shut our eyes to the difficulties which still exist, but we have a keen recollection of the great difficulties which faced this Conference when it first assembled last year. . . .

Without their work Mahatma Gandhi might have remained for many people in this country a more or less mythical figure, making salt in forbidden places or weaving all kinds of yarns.

MR. GANDHI: You mean spinning all kinds of yarns.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Session, pp. 103-5

[1] In "Diary, 1931", Gandhiji mentions having sent a cable to Vallabhbhai Patel on this date. Presumably this is the cable.

[2] Actually Gandhiji sailed from Brindisi on December 14.

231. INTERVIEW TO LONDON GENERAL PRESS

[Before *November 30, 1931*][1]

If the Round Table Conference fails the effects on British trade will be disastrous, for the boycott will increase. One would think, therefore, it is to Britain's own interests to see that the Conference does not fail. I am even prepared to make reasonable sacrifices rather than that should happen. Of course the Round Table Conference will be a partial failure should only part of our demands be granted. It would be a failure to that extent.

Q. Would you be content if only part were granted with a promise of a fuller measure later on?

A. I should have to consider what was offered. It is not likely that I can get all I want. But if what I get is such that I can make much of it, then I might reconcile myself to it. I am prepared to compromise if necessary.

I do not think that India should appeal to the League of Nations. Not now. We are still negotiating. If the Round Table Conference fails, then those who have no faith in the direct method may place India's cause before the Tribunal of the League. But I would not do so. I prefer the method of civil resistance because it is the cleanest and the best method. The League of Nations is not strong enough to deal with the question. India is a world in itself. It is too big a bite even for the League.

Q. Do you agree with me, Mr. Gandhi, that you are the safety-catch on the great machine of India, that you are the restraining influence on the wild youth of the country, that it would be criminal folly to deport you from India, for once you are gone, there will be revolt and rebellion?

A. I agree with you. Such a thing would be the act of a blind man who wilfully shuts his eyes to the state of affairs in India, who fails to realize the extent to which this unrest, this demand for swaraj has gripped the whole country. If I were to be deported from India many evil things might happen, but I feel that even in my absence my influence for peace will last;

[1] The source does not mention the date. From the contents, however, it would seem that the interview took place before the commencement of the last session of the Round Table Conference on November 30.

though I may be far away my spirit will remain behind. The struggle would go on. It would become more acute. Yet I trust it would not become violent. I should be sorry to think my restraining influence should disappear after I had vanished. No, I should not resist deportation. No true satyagrahi should resist suffering laid on him. He must welcome any punishment that is meted out to him.

Passing to another topic Gandhi remarked:

Machinery is a grand yet awful invention. It is possible to visualize a stage at which the machines invented by man may finally engulf civilization. If man controls the machines, then they will not; but should man lose his control over the machines and allow them to control him, then they will certainly engulf civilization and everything.

Q. What are your impressions of the West? Do you condemn Western civilization?

A. I have condemned it. It is too hurried, too materialistic, too artificial. I cannot say that I hate it. "Hate" is a bad word to use. But I strongly dislike it. No, I am not going to America. I must return to India. I must hurry back there. My country has need of me.

Yes, I have met many of the leading men of Europe. Not politicians alone—men of the world of art and literature too, of every walk of life. I have met the great ones, and I have mingled freely with the very poorest of the poor. I have met Bernard Shaw.

Q. What do you think of him?

A. Well, I think he is a very good man.

Q. So are many people.

A. Well, I think he is a very witty man, a lover of epigram and paradox, with a Puck-like spirit and a generous ever-young heart, the Arch Jester of Europe.

Whom do I consider the most true friend of India? Comparisons are invidious; it is difficult to single out one when I have met in England so many true friends of India. I really cannot say who impressed me as having the most forceful personality. I must be discreet.

My dream of a free India? Ah! It will take years to materialize. I see India free, self-governing and self-supporting, with peace abroad and trade and communications well established, with great cities in which busy men and women dwell contented as

bees in humming hives, and with a chain of linked villages happy in their home industries. Women shall play their part equally with men in this new, free India.

"Then to the clear, blue heavens, her banner wide unfurled,
Let the New India face the future and the world."

The Hindu, 21-12-1931

232. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY SESSION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

LONDON,
November 30, 1931

MR. GHUZNAVI: . . . We demand separate electorates, and we will continue to demand them. We have them now. We had them for over twenty years with considerable experience of their work and we believe them to be an absolute essential for our safety. This is the result of experience and not of mere opinion. With your permission I will just read a few passages quoted in the supplementary note by Sir Abdullah al-M'amun Suhrawardy, to the Report of the Indian Central Committee:

"I do not believe that the Mussalman is the natural enemy of the Hindu. . . . I have no desire to obtain swaraj, even if it were possible, by the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest of a single minority." (Mr. M. K. Gandhi in *Young India*,[1] quoted in the Overseas Edition of *The Statesman*, September 19th, 1929.)

MR. GANDHI: *Young India* is here to confirm that opinion.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, p. 209

233. CABLE TO SANYAL

[On or after *November 30, 1931*][2]

CLOSELY FOLLOWING SITUATION. WISH YOUNG MEN WOULD LEARN PRICELESS LESSON NON-VIOLENCE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18367

[1] For the correct version, *vide* Vol. XLI, p. 378.

[2] This was in reply to the addressee's cable received on November 30, asking Gandhiji to send a message for a special Bengal Provincial Conference which was to be held at Berhampore on December 5.

234. *LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE*

[On or before *December 1, 1931*][1]

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I appreciate your confidence. I am sorry I cannot associate myself in the address. You know the reasons. I have nothing whatsoever against the person of His Majesty. It is the principle underlying which I cannot subscribe to. The best way out of the difficulty is for you to tell me when the address will be moved and for me to absent myself at the time. I do not want to do anything to mar the proceedings so far as possible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 10375. Courtesy: British High Commission

235. *LETTER TO CHAIRMAN, ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*[2]

[On or before *December 1, 1931*][3]

THE CHAIRMAN
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

DEAR SIR,

In affixing our signatures to this letter, we, the undersigned delegates attending the Round Table Conference, before its conclusion, desire to express and to bring to your personal notice our deep sense of appreciation of the unfailing courtesy, attention, kindness and excellent services rendered to us during our stay in England while attending the Round Table Conference, by the Joint Social Secretaries, Mr. F. A. M. H. Vincent, C.I.E., C.B.E., M.V.O., and Mr. P. K. Dutt. The able manner in which these two officers have performed their onerous and delicate

[1] The letter is undated. It is clear, however, that it was written on or before December 1, 1931 on which date the last session of the Round Table Conference ended.

[2] It is not certain if this was drafted by Gandhiji.

[3] The last session of the Round Table Conference took place on December 1, and this, as the text would indicate, was written before that date.

duties has, in our opinion, enabled all of us to come into close contact with each other and understand one another.

Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI
[AND MANY OTHERS]

From a photostat: C.W. 9384. Courtesy: India Office Library

236. *SPEECH AT PLENARY SESSION OF ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

LONDON,
December 1, 1931[1]

PRIME MINISTER AND FRIENDS,

I wish that I could have done without having to speak to you, but I felt that I would not have been just to you or just to my principles if I did not put in what may be the last word on behalf of the Congress. I live under no illusion. I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of the liberty of practically a whole continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all, say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that so and so is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or no decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority. But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these Reports you will find that there is a dissenting opi-

[1] The session began on November 30 and, after adjourning at 11.50 p.m., was resumed at 12.5 a.m.

nion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow Delegates, but I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely: what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent of the population of India, that is to say, the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further: that the Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasize that claim.

All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organization; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organization that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognize, as it has been recognized, that the National Congress of India is a daily-growing organization, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India; that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit 700,000 villages.

And yet here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it as a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India-wide national organization, bereft of any communal basis; that it does represent all the minorities which have lodged their claims here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim—I hold unjustifiably—to represent 46 per cent of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these minorities.

What a great difference it would be today if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognized. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the

sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this table, and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this table. I say so for this reason. Congress is a powerful organization; Congress is an organization which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress, you would welcome an organization which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organization, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances. But no. Although you have invited the Congress, you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word 'rebellion' must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But the Congress does not hold that view, quite. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

I heard several speakers—and let me say I have endeavoured not to miss a single sitting; I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a schoolboy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained to their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used by what I consider blind lovers of liberty and freedom, and the historian has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident

that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen. I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress, the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other misstatements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation and out of regard for truth and on behalf of those who are not here tonight to put in their defence that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year, several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation. If our boys in Calcutta were taught these verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited, I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the schoolmasters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation.

Charges of this nature have been brought against the Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust. The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following that method up. But again I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the Government may not tolerate, no government has tolerated open rebellion. No government may tolerate civil disobedience, but governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British

Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts is a brave General, a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect, and the things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in the year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing; the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late today to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them on again to a fight of that character, but if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot, I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives; it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that—I am paraphrasing his inimitable language. He said: You do not consider for one moment that the Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless? I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman, Lord Irwin, had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and that thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, lathis or no lathis, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you

to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore please remember that I will count no sacrifice too great if by chance I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like; a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, mean the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and will find the Congress itself always in a compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using, so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister, I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find a ground where you can apply the spirit of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say that up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said: "Have you seen the definition of 'Dominion'?" I read the definition of 'Dominion', and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word 'Dominion' was exhaustively defined, and it has not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word 'Dominion' shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on, ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said: "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what Complete Independence means. In a way I was relieved. I said I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word 'Dominion', because I am out of it. But I want Complete Independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said: "Yes, you can have Complete Independence, but what is the meaning of 'complete independence'?" And again we come to

different definitions. Therefore, I say the Congress claim is registered as Complete Independence.

One of your great statesmen[1]—I do not think I should give his name—was debating with me, and he said: "Honestly, I did not know that you meant this by Complete Independence." He ought to have known, but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him, "I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said, "Of course, that is logical." I said, "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefits; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from off its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman whom also you know and whom also you respect. Among many things he writes: "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship," and as if I would not understand that, he says, "your people and mine". I must read to you what he also says, "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that, when he writes this last sentence, he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organization which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and today the Congress has accepted that philosophy not as a creed, as it is to

[1] Presumably, Lloyd George who met Gandhiji on November 18; *Vide* "Diary, 1931".

me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and best thing for India, a nation of three hundred and fifty millions, to do. A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say "No", and that nation is today learning to say "No".

But what is it that that nation does? Summarily, or at all, dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is today to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it 'complete independence' or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word, I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the same meaning. Hence I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

Three experts from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have in their own manner, each in his different manner, told you out of their expert experience how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 80 per cent of India's resources are mortgaged irretrivably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown, out of the amplitude of their knowledge, what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards, but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet, while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented, I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat, that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee, I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that these safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of

Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word, I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference. I will agree with them all, that we have after all, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never come to brass tacks as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining to come to real grips and to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: 'Why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points?' Heaven knows I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them. They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problems and find a way out of these problems. But today you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that, whilst I abate not a tittle of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi, and a host of other constitutionalists can weave into being.

I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at, at Delhi, into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man, 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organization that he represents. You distrust that organization though you may seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organization of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organization to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organization; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derive from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. Today you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organized terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands today who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussalman also by contact, good or evil, with the Hindu, has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussalman brings me to the baffling problem of minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words — that without the problem of minorities being solved there is no swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that, I realize it; and yet I came here in the hope, perchance, that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere, that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities. It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian, he said, "If God"—'Allah', as he called God—"gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman rule in India; and then I will show through documents that British people have erred, that Aurangzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history," and so on. And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship, between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I want to say one word about the Princes, and I shall have done. I have not said much about the Princes, nor do I intend to say much tonight about the Princes, but I should be wronging them, and I should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference, but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements — only elements — of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain

undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

Sir, a note has been placed in my hands by my friend Sir Abdul Qaiyum, and he says, will not I say one word about the Frontier Province? I will, and it is this. Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy today. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore, the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial autonomy tomorrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from tomorrow the Frontier Province becomes a full-fledged autonomous Province, I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is, perhaps, the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knees before I take the final leap and final plunge. But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all—from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End, where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement which represents the poor people of the East End of London I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them, they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me—that

is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection. It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation, no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them, but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, pp. 265-75

237. INTERVIEW TO JOURNALISTS[1]

[*December 1, 1931*][2]

Q. How can Christian pacifists and internationalists help India?

A. First of all they can do so by a thorough scientific study of the question, so that events shall not nonplus them, and so that they shall not be subject to vacillation. There are people who sometimes hug me and sometimes revile me. They are subject to the passing moment. I want them to assimilate the truth about the movement in India so that they are not easily changed. If there are such people, then the movement is safe. Otherwise it has no roots. This study must also be followed by corporate action based on the truth they have assimilated.[3]

[1] Someone signing himself "H. W. P." met Gandhiji along with "a small party of journalists". His account of the interview in *The Friend* has been collated with another report in *Reconciliation*.

[2] "H. W. P." mentions a meeting held at Friends' House on December 2 and says the interview took place "on the previous morning, just before the beginning of the last session of the Round Table Conference". The session concluded on this date.

[3] The three paragraphs that follow are from *Reconciliation*.

Peace may arise out of strife, for all strife is not antipacific. To stand with folded hands is not to achieve reform.

I have been told that by suffering myself I hurt the feelings of those who are opposed to me. Yes, certainly I do. That is what I want to do. Surely you do not want your opponent to be so hard-hearted that he is indifferent to what others suffer. Of course, the sufferings must not be wanton and not merely for the sake of suffering. That would be terrible. I only suffer if I must suffer. When the suffering is there, the suffering must be borne; it is a necessity.

Is not this the process of conversion? Instead of overthrowing your adversary, and compelling him either to yield or perish you permit yourself to be overthrown and to suffer. If it hurts him to see you suffer, that is what you want. The pacifists in this country do not believe in the fundamental law of peace. They must be prepared to suffer with those who suffer.

It has been said to me, 'Surely it is not necessary to impose this suffering upon ourselves? Why cannot the object be obtained by way of negotiation?' I reply, 'Argument has never convinced any man, but, on the contrary, conviction precedes argument.' If that were not so, all books would appeal to all men alike. I have been touched by books which made no appeal to millions, because I already had the conviction within me.

Take my vegetarianism. I was born a vegetarian. I was a vegetarian by the vow I made before my mother. Then I read Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism* and I was convinced, but the conviction was already in me. Similarly with Ruskin's *Unto This Last.* I was trying to follow that life, but Ruskin made it real in my own life. He changed it, but the conviction was already there. To others, in whom the conviction was not already, the same book would make no appeal.

Q. How, Mr. Gandhi, can satyagraha be effective when followed merely as a method and not as a principle?

A. 'Satyagraha' means utter insistence upon truth. When a man insists on truth, it gives him power. If a man without real perception uses it, he is taking its name in vain. I may refuse to acknowledge the rule of the road because of some principle involved. Another man may do so because he finds it inconvenient. We are both doing the same thing, but in the one case there is moral backing for the action, but not in the other. One of us is a civil resister, the other is a criminal resister. But the danger has

its own corrective in that ultimately you have to suffer, and not many will invoke suffering from an impure motive.

The true conscientious objector is correct in his conduct, for he has a spiritual backing. But the act is correct whether there is spiritual backing or not. The difference is that the conduct in one case is correct throughout, and, in the other only up to a point.

Q. You have often said that Western civilization is Satanic. What are its Satanic elements, and are none of these elements present in Indian civilization?

A. Western civilization is material, frankly material. It measures progress by the progress of matter—railways, conquest of disease, conquest of the air. These are the triumphs of civilization according to Western measure. No one says, 'Now the people are more truthful or more humble.' I judge it by my own test and I use the word 'Satanic' in describing it. You set such store by the temporal, external things. The essential of Eastern civilization is that it is spiritual, immaterial. The fruits of Western civilization the East may approach with avidity but with a sense of guilt. Your idea is the more you want the better you are, and you don't fall far short in your belief. Your civilization has gone from one stage to another. There is no end to it. You are proud of your conquest over nature, but this makes no appeal to me. You might see me fly tomorrow, but I should be feeling guilty about it. Suppose all your London tubes and buses were taken away. I should say, 'Thank God I shall be able to walk to my quarters at Bow, even if it takes me three hours.'

A final question put to Mr. Gandhi was as to whether he found the spirit which he sought in any of the Western religious books. He replied at once:

Yes. For instance, some years ago my friend Henry Polak gave me Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ.* I read it through at a sitting and I thought I was reading an Eastern book.

Q. You mean a universal book?

A. Well, when I use the term 'Eastern' I mean 'Universal'. The term is one of my little 'foot rules'.

The Friend, 11-12-1931, and *Reconciliation*, January 1932

238. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY SESSION OF ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

December 1, 1931

CHAIRMAN : . . . At the beginning of the year I made a declaration of the policy of the then Government, and I am authorized by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration:

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by Minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

"In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new Constitution to full responsibility for her own government."

With regard to the Central Government, I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty's late Government were prepared to recognize the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature, if both were constituted on an all-India Federal basis. The principle of responsibility was to be subject to the qualification that, in existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General, and that, in regard to Finance such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.

Finally, it was our view that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

These were, in broad outline, the features of the new Constitution for India as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an all-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to pursue this plan unswervingly and to do their utmost to surmount the difficulties

which now stand in the way of its realization. In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you will be circulated today as a White Paper to both Houses of Parliament, and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

MR. GANDHI: Prime Minister and Friends, the privilege and the responsibility of moving a vote of thanks to the Chair have been entrusted to me, and I have taken up the responsibility and the privilege with the greatest pleasure. It is not expected of any single one of us, and least of all of me, that I should say on this occasion anything whatsoever about the weighty pronouncement to which we have all just listened. A chairman who conducts the proceedings of his meeting in a becoming and courteous manner is always entitled to a vote of thanks, whether those who compose the meeting agree with the decisions taken at the meeting, or with the decisions that may be given by the Chairman himself.

Sir, I know that yours was a double duty. You had not only to conduct the proceedings of the Conference with becoming dignity and with impartiality, but you had often to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government. And your final act in the Chair has been to convey the considered decision of His Majesty's Government over the many matters on which this Conference has deliberated. I propose to omit that part of your task; but for me the pleasanter part is how you have conducted the proceedings, and let me congratulate you upon the lessons that you have given us so often in time-sense. Chairmen often neglect that very elementary duty, and I must confess in my country almost with tiresome regularity. We are not credited with proper time-sense. Prime Minister, it will be my pleasant and bounden duty to give to my countrymen when I return to India what the British Prime Minister has done in the matter of time-sense.

The other thing that you have shown us is your amazing industry. Brought up in your hard Scotch climate, you have not known what rest is, and you have not allowed us also to know what rest is. With, shall I say, almost unexampled ferocity you worked every one of us, including old men like my friend and revered brother Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and equally old men like me. You have worked almost to exhaustion, with a pitilessness worthy of a Scotsman like you, my friend and revered leader Mr. Sastri. You let us know yesterday that you knew his physical condition, but before a sense of duty you set aside all these personal considerations. All honour to you for that, and I shall treasure this amazing industry of yours.

But let me say on this matter that, although I belong to a climate which is considered to be luxuriant, almost bordering on the equatorial regions, perhaps we might there be able to cross swords with you in industry, but that does not matter. If what you gave us yesterday, if that is only a foretaste of what you are capable of—working even for a full twenty-four hours as your House of Commons has done at times—well then, of course, you will take the palm.

Therefore I have the greatest pleasure in moving this vote of thanks. But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps a greater reason why I should shoulder this responsibility and esteem the privilege that has been given to me. It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely, because I would like to study your declaration, once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning—if there is a hidden meaning in it—crossing all the T's, dotting all the I's, before I come to a conclusion—that, so far as I am concerned, we have come to the parting of the ways, that our ways take different directions; it does not matter to us. Even so, you are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us in this society of ours for all to agree in order to respect one another. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that there is no principle left with you. On the contrary, dignity of human nature requires we must face the storms of life, and sometimes even blood brothers have got to go each his own way, but if at the end of their quarrel—at the end of their difference—they can say that they bore no malice, and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier—if it will be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and of my countrymen, and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well. I do not know. I do not know in what direction my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart.[1]

CHAIRMAN: . . . I am so much obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the very kind and friendly things he said in moving this resolution. There is only one thing I quarrel with him about, and I hope he will not consider it is a major thing, and I hope he will not have any misunderstandings about it. It

[1] The vote of thanks was carried unanimously and with acclamation.

is this. Why does he refer to himself, in relation to me, as an old man? Why, the Mahatma has got years to his advantage. It was a young man who spoke at 12 o'clock last night—a young man, a youth. It was an old man who sat in the chair and kept him at his work. Mr. Gandhi has got the advantage of youth compared with me. I do not know which of us looks the older—but if you turn up these records that lie not, the records of "Who's Who", and that sort of thing, you will discover that in the ordinary course of nature I am much nearer the end of my time than Mr. Gandhi himself, — ("No, you are not, Sir") —and that, if there is anybody who has got any grievance about prolonged sitting it is not the young man who spoke,—as I see you all, smiling youths—it was the old man who presided over you and whom you kept out of bed until half-past two this morning and then made him get up at 6 o'clock this morning in order to come here with a prepared statement to read to you. That is where the grievance is. But my friends, I have none — not a particle, not a shadow—if it has been in the interests of India and for the purpose of bringing you together.

There is only one thing more I want to say. I am so glad that my old friend opposite me (Sir Abdul Qaiyum) seconded the resolution. It is a great achievement to get Mahatma Gandhi and him together. That is a foretaste of what is going to happen when Muslim and Hindu—

MR. GANDHI : Not Hindu!

CHAIRMAN : Mr. Gandhi understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue.

MR. GANDHI : I forgive it.

CHAIRMAN : He understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue such as mine, but the Mussalmans and the others came together. I am beginning to pick up Mr. Gandhi's thoughts, because he has always told us that you were sections and that he comprehended you all.

MR. GANDHI : Of course!

CHAIRMAN : But look at the effect of the two of you coming together in order to co-operate and express your gratitude to a Scotsman. My dear Mahatma, let us go on in this way; it is the best way; you may find it will be the only way. It is certainly a way that will enable both of us to take great pride in our work and to relate our political action with those glorious spiritual impulses which lie at the source of all our being.

One other thing. When the Mahatma takes the Chair in India, if he will let me know, I will come over and see whether he is an apt pupil of mine or not, whether he can enforce with energy and with success the "time-sense" for which he has been so kind and liberal in his praise of me this morning.

Well, a very good voyage home to you all! A very happy and very prosperous returning! And do remember that we are enlisted in the same cause,

that we are bound by the same loyalty, the loyalty to India herself. Do remember to stand shoulder to shoulder with us, to exchange views, and by mutual co-operation, with good luck and good fortune, we shall solve the problems that now confront us and see India stand self-governing and self-respecting in the world.

For the last time, I declare that the Conference now adjourns.[1]

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, pp. 289-300

239. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
December 1, 1931

It is not so much the Premier's statement or what happened at the Conference that is worrying me as what is happening in India at the present moment. You have an English saying which is appropriate : "Coming events cast their shadow before." Well, the situation in India, especially in Bengal, is very ugly, leaving little room for hope that anything big will come out of the Conference. I refer to the Ordinance just passed in Bengal giving extraordinary powers to the Government to deal with what has been called terrorism and to a certain extent rightly so called, but past experience tells me that the Government has become panicky as it is wont when European life is taken or is attempted. I detest such a crime, but I am quite clear in my mind that the powers taken are altogether out of all proportion to the possibilities of the spread of terrorism. If it is left to me, it shall be dealt with under ordinary law.

I must say the executive in authority has very wide powers even under the ordinary law, and after all is said and done, if one were to examine the mere arithmetic in connection with terrorism, I do not think Bengal would come out the worst. Then, instead of dealing with the root cause, the Government of India, rather the Government of Bengal, assisted by the Government of India and the Secretary of State here have merely dealt with the symptom and not the disease. Terrorists, everybody admits, do not resort to terrorism for the sake of it. Nobody throws away his life without some motive behind and it is, I think, admitted by all that the terrorists resort to their method in the hope of thereby securing freedom for their country. If that freedom comes, there

[1] The Conference terminated at 12.33 p.m.

surely may be no terrorism, certainly no attempts on European life or the life of officials whether they are Europeans or others. If I had my way, therefore, I would certainly utilize all the ordinary legal powers to put down crime and at the same time find out what the terrorists mean by freedom and if, as a result of enquiry, I found their demands just, I would straight away concede their demands and there would be no terrorism in the land.

The late Mr. C. R. Das and many other public men of his time advised the Government to adopt this method, but their advice went unheeded or was not accepted in the fullest extent. But it is never too late to retrace one's steps in a matter of this character and I fear very much that, unless full freedom for which the nation is hungering comes, terrorism will not be rooted out.

The Congress has adopted a method whereby terrorism can entirely be replaced by means of civil resistance and all it means, and I am certain the Congress method has, in a very large degree, kept the terrorist crime under check. But I make no larger claim for the Congress method just yet. I hope, however, whether the Government regains sanity or not, the Congress will pursue its course and some day effectively stamp out terrorism. But I confess that the progress is slow as all methods of conversion are likely to be.

The relevance, however, of what I have said is that these extraordinary powers of repression with which the Bengal Government has armed itself seem to me wholly inconsistent with the desire expressed here to part with power, and give India the real freedom she wants. Apart, therefore, from the meaning which the Premier's declaration bears, this Ordinance and the other things that, I know, are happening in India, fill me with the greatest misgivings and may leave the Congress no choice in the matter of tendering further co-operation.

How I wish public opinion here was moved in the right direction. I am sure if the honest Indian version of the whole affair came to light as to what is happening in Bengal today, it would not, at any rate, be tolerated.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-12-1931

240. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

LONDON,
December 2, 1931

MY DEAR HENRY,

I was distressed to find that without waiting to discuss with me you paid the landlady two days' extra rent. You ignored the conditions that were made. And now without even caring to know the facts you have insisted upon payment of damages for the wear and tear of the carpet. Prosperity and association with the rich and the powerful have evidently unfitted you to represent the poor —you should know that I am not operating on my own property. I am trustee for the poor and I have no right to squander away the monies belonging to the poor. And every rupee coming into my hands becomes part of the poor man's trust. I have said nothing to you about the past transaction when you paid the cheque to the landlady. I had to speak sharply to both Maud and Andrews. I had hoped that after that incident nothing would be done over my head. I am deeply hurt. Now tell me what you would have me do about the carpet.

Love.

BHAI

H. S. L. POLAK
DE VERE GARDENS
LONDON

From a photostat: S.N. 18373

241. INTERVIEW TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG[1]

LONDON,
December 2, 1931

In my last letter to Mr. Gandhi relating to his statement at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on October 20 that literacy in India had diminished during the last 50 or 100 years,[2] I had asked him for an interview. . . . I went to see Mr. Gandhi at 88 Knightsbridge, at 4 p.m. and

[1] Extracted from Sir Philip Hartog's notes of the interview
[2] *Vide* pp. 193-206.

stayed till five. He was lying on a sofa, covered with his shawl, in front of a big fire, obviously tired, though he insisted on rising both when I came and when I went. He told me that he had thought his strength was equal to anything, but that he was now saturated. I suggested that he might be too tired to discuss matters, but he said that it was a pleasure to meet me and he apologized sincerely for not having written to offer me an appointment.

He admitted at once that he had at present no facts to substantiate his statements and did not attempt to answer my argument that the articles in *Young India* for December 8 and 29, 1920 by Daulat Ram Gupta, of which he had furnished me with typed copies, contained no literacy figures and that the most recent official report on them, Dr. G. W. Leitner's *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab*, was written in 1882 and could therefore furnish no evidence with regard to the progress or decline of literacy in India during the last 50 years. He told me that Mr. Mahadev Desai (who was present) had been investigating the matter in the British Museum. Mr. Desai admitted that he had found nothing fresh up to the present. Mr. Gandhi said that he would question the writer of the articles in *Young India* and that on his return he would get competent friends at his Ashram to investigate the matter for him over there and that he would send me a cablegram with regard to the result, and that in it he would say whether he had found material that would convince me that he was right, or that he would apologize handsomely for his mistake, and he would make his withdrawal in such a way as to reach a much wider audience than his original statement.

I showed him Leitner's book and pointed out the statement on p. 3 in which Leitner pointed out that the Punjab was not typical, but far behind the Central Provinces and Lower Bengal in the proportion of pupils to population, a statement not referred to by Mr. Gupta, though he had quoted figures in regard to Hushiarpur from p. 2. I told Mr. Gandhi that the population of British India in 1882 was roughly speaking 210 millions and that it had increased in 1931 to about 270 millions, i.e., about 30 per cent in round figures, and that during that period the number of pupils under instruction in British India had increased from about 2½ millions to over 11 millions, i.e., more than 4 times, and that it would be surprising, therefore, if literacy had diminished during these 50 years.

I also pointed out that it was impossible to draw any accurate conclusions, on the other hand, in regard to literacy from the numbers of pupils under instruction. Howell in his *Education in British India* had pointed out that for many reasons, including the early age at which the children are withdrawn, the schools in the early 19th century were almost worthless. I also mentioned that during the years 1917-1927 in Bengal with an increased enrolment of over 300,000 pupils (the actual figure is about 370,000) there had been a decline of about 30,000 pupils in number that reached class IV where, under present conditions, literacy was first attained.

I also showed Mr. Gandhi certain figures of literacy for Bengal from Adam's *Report on Vernacular Education of 1835-38* and compared them with the census figures for 1921, Vol. 5, p. 302. I further showed him census figures for 1911 and 1901 taken from the same volume, p. 285, showing considerable increases in literacy in Burma, Bengal and Madras, though the Punjab, Bihar, Bombay and United Provinces had made little or no progress during those years. Mr. Gandhi said, "I know very little about these things" in a tone of apology, to which I rejoined that he had no doubt many other things to occupy his attention.

Towards the end of the interview, I said that I hoped that he was now on the side of peace. He replied that he had meant exactly what he had said on the previous day, that he would read the Prime Minister's declaration over again and again, and that he felt the immense personal responsibility that rested on his shoulders in advising Congress. He said that he had postponed his departure in order to see Sir Samuel Hoare on the following Friday as Sir Samuel had said that he would have no free time during the debate in Parliament (on the Wednesday and Thursday). I said: "I am sure you must be convinced that Englishmen are in earnest in wishing to give India everything possible at the present moment." He said:

Yes, but there is one thing that the English sincerely believe, but which I cannot understand. They think us incapable of managing our own affairs even with the help of experts. When I was a young man and my father was Prime Minister of an Indian State, I knew the Prime Minister of another Indian State (Junagadh), who could hardly sign his own name but who was a very remarkable man and managed the State wonderfully. He knew just who were the right people to advise him and took their advice. When I spoke to your own Prime Minister about the exchange value of the rupee, he said to me that he knew nothing about exchange values, that the Prime Minister had of course to do things in his own name, but had really to depend on experts. We have had experience in governing in the past and we could do equally well.

I ended up the interview by saying that I was a man of peace, and had no desire to enter on a controversy, but that I must state the facts in the *Journal of International Affairs*, and to this I understood Mr. Gandhi to assent. I wished him a pleasant journey back to India and said I hoped I had not tired him. He replied that it had been a real pleasure to see me, and that he hoped to keep in touch with me. . . .

Mr. Gandhi said that he had not accused the British Government of having destroyed the indigenous schools, but they had let them die for want of encouragement.

I next told Mr. Gandhi that I could accept his suggestion that universal primary education must necessarily be very remote, and that my Committee had estimated that an additional recurring expenditure of about 19 crores would bring about 80 per cent of boys and girls into the primary school system. Mr. Gandhi then asked me if I thought that primary education would be much use unless the children went on to middle schools. I said that was the next step that would follow, and that I regarded the encouragement of vernacular middle schools as of the greatest importance not only for the sake of the children, but because they produce the primary teachers. I said that I was sorry that Bengal despised vernacular middle schools and insisted on English-teaching middle schools.

We then spoke of girls' education and I quoted the opinion of my Committee that, in all schemes of expansion, priority should be given to the claims of girls. Mr. Gandhi said that he entirely agreed, but he asked himself whether primary education would make girls better mothers. Mr. Gandhi said that he had not read the Report of my Committee.

From a photostat: C.W. Courtesy: 9408. India Office Library

242. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*

LONDON,
December 3, 1931

Squatting before a fire in a small room in his Knightsbridge office, Mahatma Gandhi shortly before midnight received some 40 Press representatives, seated on the floor round him. He told them that he was unable to give his decisive view either on the Premier's statement or on the Common debate, but assured them that, before reaching any conclusion, he proposed to exhaust all resources at his disposal in order to understand both the statement and the debate. Mahatma Gandhi added that any conclusion he might reach would have no weight until it had been submitted to the Congress Working Committee and accepted by it.

Mahatma Gandhi repeated his declaration regarding civil disobedience and reaffirmed his tentative opinion that the statement meant a parting of the ways, but he had not yet studied it as he had promised. Mahatma Gandhi said that it was a tremendous responsibility for any man to call upon a nation to go through the fiery ordeal again. Therefore, he was not likely light-heartedly to advise the resumption of civil disobedience, but persistence in the policy of repression envisaged by the Bengal Ordinance might upset all calculations and precipitate any day civil disobedience on a national scale. Mahatma Gandhi declared that there was no justification for the Ordinance and continued:

I am no more pessimistic than when I left India. I never believed that we would get anything more than what our own internal strength entitled. The Round Table Conference negotiations have been a method of finding out the measure of our strength compared with those with whom power at present resides. We have evidently failed. The Congress, therefore, must refill the battery so that it will be powerful enough to do its work.

Mahatma Gandhi thought that it was a good thing that he came to England. His work outside the Conference had been more valuable than the work inside it. He was willing to continue negotiations provided Government's policy was a policy of conciliation and consultation of public opinion, and if the Premier's declaration left room for the acceptance of the Congress demands. In that event, he would advise the continuance of whole-hearted co-operation. Mahatma Gandhi regretted that he had not met Mr. Churchill and others. He expects to reach India on 28th December.

The Hindustan Times, 6-12-1931

243. *DISCUSSION WITH J. F. HORRABIN AND OTHERS*[1]

LONDON,
December 3, 1931

HORRABIN : Government proposals are dangerously plausible.

GANDHIJI : The declaration is no advance on past year. In one essential respect it is a backward step. Not that it has gone back, but whereas last year's proposals[2] were tentative, this year's leave no room for alteration. They are not provisional but final. Last year's are to be accepted subject to the recommendations made by the Federal Structure Committee. These are stiffer than last year's, e.g., Financial safeguards. Last year's conclusions were, I was told, not final and that is why I came. The declaration accepts the findings of the Federal Structure Committee. Every report states a dissent but does not say whose. If the quantum of the vote of each party was to be considered, the Congress vote would be larger than all put together.

Defence and Finance are Crown subjects. It is a wholly untenable position. No man is master of his household unless he has control over the door-keeper and his purse. So I said Indians accepting this would make themselves a laughing-stock. It is a humiliating position. It is also dishonest. Government should have

[1] The discussion took place in the evening.
[2] Those made at the First Round Table Conference

said: we are prepared to give you control. But they are talking here of transitional safeguards.

Now consider this thing in the light of happenings in Bengal. The Ordinance is most objectionable. The most objectionable was the Rowlatt Act. This is much more objectionable. It reminds us of the Mutiny days and Martial Law days. It is worse than the Martial Law. In Martial Law decisions are liable to be revised, not here. Here it is legalized Martial Law. Attempt to commit murder to be punished by hanging. No appeal, proceedings in camera, mere boys given powers to try, and they can transmit these powers to police officers. The Irish thing is not worse. Delivering up the absconders. This will punish the whole of Bengal. The crimes in Martial Law were bad, but vengeance was terrible.

When I read the declaration in the light of this Ordinance I find no readiness to part with power. The little responsibility given is a shadow and our difficulties to work under this handicap would be evidence against us. Take the assembly today. Men, practically of Government nomination, rejected proposals which got certified. The budget also suffered the same fate. How can you have responsible government the next day when you have undiluted repression? In South Africa, when responsible government came, it came naturally to them. People knew it was coming. Every organic growth is like that. Here is no such thing. But my opinion is subject to this that the present proposals are tentative, that some alterations would be made, that the Ordinance would be removed in two or three days.

WRENCH : I cannot help feeling that there is a great change. Rothermere and Churchill do not count very much. MacDonald's statement is better than I had hoped. If you get a Tory majority as far as it has gone, I do not think you can have anything better. Why not wait for three years? Let Great Britain show that it is really honest.

GANDHIJI : The Irish parallel does not answer. There were negotiations during which there was no repression; here repression is going on whilst there have been negotiations going on. Sir Samuel Hoare frankly said: "I have no confidence in your ability or competence." If you say, don't judge us by what Churchill says, I agree. But if you say, don't judge us by what MacDonald says or Lothian says, then I should despair. Hoare is a straight man, a man of his word, honest; but he is rigid, hard, impossible to dislodge, [and shows an] amazing ignorance of Indian history. He feels that Indian administration has been a positive

blessing. He feels that he can't conduct this Government without this thing. Others do the same thing [but] they don't say what Hoare says.

LASKI: The whole Cabinet does not believe in the Ordinance. I would allow you just a little grace.

GANDHIJI: No? Then the members should resign. It is a sickening thing. It is positively horrid. I will break myself in the attempt to break it. If you remain silent in a matter of this kind you are guilty.

LASKI: Consider from our angle that the Prime Minister made a brilliant strategic move. He postponed the hour of effective decision. He has made your strategic position difficult, ours also difficult. It seems to me that you are entitled to ask him for the full proof of his good faith. If I was in your position, I should ask for the complete revision of the Bengal Ordinance. You can ask him to explain what is happening there. Rather than say to them: you have committed sin and I can have nothing to do with you. Then there are committees. You can insist on good faith by having right kind of men. I should demand a substantial representation of Congress on committees. Thirdly I should want proof in the shape of increasing association of Indians in the Central responsibility. It is the gravest error to regard these things as water-tight compartments. Before civil disobedience is resumed, I want you within a period to urge on Government that, if they are prepared to meet you, you would continue with the Round Table Conference work.

GANDHIJI: Even without entering into your difficulties, as a satyagrahi I can't do anything else. I do propose to take the same steps you have suggested in my talks tomorrow. I will not say safeguards are capable of being split up. To retain the subjects for the Crown and then to part with certain things is no good for me. But there may be safeguards conceived which may not imperil the defence of India and the defence of English lives. I would certainly hammer into shape certain safeguards of this kind. It should be open to me in Committee to revise these safeguards. If so, I would consider them; but if you think 'no', then we should have nothing to do. As regards association of Indians I would not be satisfied; there should be a radical change of policy. They will have to respond to public opinion. They should have men with Congress mentality. This Ordinance is directed against Congress. Terrorism should be fought, but an administration which takes no risks should not think of administration but retire and make room for other men. President Carnot[1] had no sense of security.

[1] Marie Francois Sadi (1837-94), fourth President of the French Republic

Cleveland[1] was murdered, but America did not go mad. You can't think of emasculating a whole nation. Cut off the heads of assassins but not of their parents, don't wipe out villages. Villages would have silent sympathy, but how can you help it? If you repress them, you will stimulate them all the more. Every step would be taken, until we have driven them into a corner. But the British mind is not in a temper to do anything more. In South Africa the Prime Minister's feat would be called "fun-making". What an equivocal declaration? I should make the best use of it, put the best interpretation on it, and pin him to it. But Government must understand India would not allow Bengal to lie prostrate. Failing all these, if the declaration bears only my interpretation, then there is only one alternative possible.

KINGSLEY MARTIN : Hoare has had a fight with MacDonald and the latter has won. And on that ground too you should restrain yourself.

GANDHIJI: Not if things in India continue to be as black as they appear to be here. In South Africa I had 16 who became 16,000.

KINGSLEY MARTIN : Certain new measures you think would be necessary?

GANDHIJI : If the ordinary law could not cope with the situation, then I should have special powers. I know Sir Charles Tegart who threw all propriety to the winds.

NEVINSON : What changes would you have?

GANDHIJI : I would want complete responsibility for Central Government. For Central subjects provinces would [not] have to be responsible. Subject to responsibility of Provinces to the Centre, they should have complete autonomy. I would not have a bicameral system. We do not want to reproduce the House of Commons.

LASKI : Don't reproduce the House of Lords.

GANDHIJI : Even the House of Commons worries me. If you had a Central Legislature for Ireland, Scotland and England, you would have a smaller House of Commons. I would not be satisfied without adult suffrage. At a stroke I arm the untouchables with tremendous power. My criterion would be that the representatives know what they talk about and that they are incorruptible. Would you trust the Liberal Party to effect a change? I trust to its good intentions, but not its capacity to put them into

[1] Presumably a slip for President William McKinley who was shot by an anarchist in 1901

effect. The electors won't allow Labour its own way so far as India is concerned. But that is nothing. I am willing to wait, if I had room for waiting. I want the active support and sympathy of every one of you. I would placate you, but I would on principle not precipitate civil resistance. How can I allow Bengal to go to pieces during the time of transition? Smuts also has said: you either get it or fight.

NEVINSON: How is it possible with the greatest possible constitutional reform to eradicate poverty?

GANDHIJI: We are trying to do it now. Show me something [to add] to the income. I would burn the spinning-wheel.

BRAILSFORD: We may be too stupid to know when we are beaten; but you may be too clever to see when you have won. I have been trying to see MacDonald's thing objectively—silence of the Muslims, complete lack of agreement on details and many other things. He would have found pretext after pretext under the circumstances. What you have got from a constitutional government is vastly more than what you got from a Labour minority. . . . MacDonald maintains his position on the constitutional question, and he accepts the constitutional position on anarchism. It is a sacrifice to the wolves so that MacDonald may save the whole cargo.

You can carry out your poverty policy once you have a majority on Provincial councils.

GANDHIJI: There is no bad faith. I feel the paralysis of the British mind. You say: take what is offered. No, you can't do it. In Centre 80 per cent is reserved. Provinces are in a pitiable condition with a top-heavy administration under the present scheme. After all Central revenue is derived from the Provinces—47 crores. With all these burdens there is no scope for improvement in Provinces. Not until you give me scope for expansion can I accept this thing.

The declaration is not a dishonest declaration.

Princes are too far committed now. Bhopal, Hydari promise to examine the terms. Ismail and others are quite sound. After the brave statement of Sir Manubhai, there should be no difficulty.

Steel industry does not lend itself to hand labour. It is either the irresponsible critic or the enemy that spreads the rumour that I am opposed to machinery. I should have most delicate machinery to make fine surgical instruments. For food and clothing I would be dead against industrialization.

WRENCH: There is a tremendous change in public opinion—in unexpected places.

GANDHIJI: I am a lover of the British nation. No virtue of yours has escaped me. You throw logic to the winds. I should have certainly patience, but not the patience of a stone. I should be convinced that the British official means good faith. Do you want me to sit still in the hope that things are coming right?

There should be a conference of men representing all shades of opinion. Only that party which can deliver the goods should be invited. Nothing is staged, but it looks as though it was staged. Did they not know that I and Sapru would never agree, or that Mussalmans who came here did not want to agree or that Dr. Moonje had no place? After all, our liberty will come through our own strength and not through weakness.

Under the present declaration there is no responsibility at the Centre or in Provinces. Regarding debts the fundamental rights are not foreclosed. There can be a clause which may contain all the rights. I am incapable of throwing a single card away.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

244. *INTERVIEW TO EDMOND DEMETER*[1]

LONDON,
[Before *December 5, 1931*][2]

Q. I thought you were the sworn enemy of all machines. How does it happen that you use a watch?[3]

A. I must know what time it is, consequently, I must use a watch. Moreover, I am doing nothing against my principles. I am an enemy not of mechanism but of organized mechanism. I consider this system, which has become the basis of your civilization, as the greatest danger which could menace man. If I use a watch, that does not mean that I am its slave. But when it is a question of the machine organized, man becomes its slave and loses all of the values with which the Lord endowed him.

Q. Excuse me, if I interrupt you. You speak of God. Your God is not mine.

A. But your God is also mine for I believe in your God, in spite of the fact that you do not believe in mine.

[1] Extracted from an account of the interview by Edmond Demeter

[2] The source does not mention the date of the interview, but Gandhiji left England on December 5.

[3] Gandhiji had looked at his watch just as the interview commenced.

Q. Exactly, because you have several.

A. That is without importance. One is able to understand as soon as one believes in man. The difference between us consists in the divergence of opinions as to man and his destiny. You say, you Europeans, that man is born without being either good or bad, and that it is the place, the institutions, and a dozen other factors which determine the road which he is going to follow. I affirm, to the contrary, that man is always good and that it is only bad institutions which turn him from the straight road.

Q. Then it is a declaration of war against our institutions?

A. No, I never make declarations of that kind. I say simply that one ought to reform human institutions in order to make them more just. The reforms ought to be realized by pacific means and, in this regard, I can recommend the same processes which I followed in my political struggle. I do not fight, for I believe that men are good, and that they are going to understand the truth some day if one will convince them by friendliness.

Q. Do you think that the English are good?

A. Of course. If there are differences between us, it is only because of their bad institutions. Some day they will understand the truth and abandon their present attitude.

Q. Is happiness the goal of your life, Mahatma?

A. No. Happiness is not the purpose of my life, but it is a means of being able to approach the true beacon of my existence. It is simple: I wish to see India independent, strong, peaceful and happy.

[A VISITOR[1]:] I leave tomorrow for India. I came to bid you good-bye.

[GANDHIJI:] What have you done in London?

[VISITOR:] I have just finished my studies in the school of medicine.

[GANDHIJI:] What do you wish to do in India?

[VISITOR:] I want to spread your ideas.

[GANDHIJI:] Are you engaged?

[VISITOR:] No.

[GANDHIJI:] Listen to me. You ought to marry as soon as possible and have children as soon as possible.

[DEMETER:] In your opinion, what world figure has exercised the greatest and best influence upon the twentieth century?

[1] This was an Indian girl who had just come in.

A. Tolstoy. He alone.

In speaking of politics, Gandhi made the following declarations:

The Indian National Congress, which I represent at the Round Table Conference, makes no distinctions between classes, beliefs or sexes. It has always shown itself the champion of the cause of the pariahs. But, before everything, the Congress represents the millions of the wretched who live in India and who represent more than 85 per cent of the population.

In the name of that organization, I demand the Complete Independence of India without excluding a voluntary association with England in terms of absolute equality. We do not refuse certain federation or recognized safeguards for the interests of India.

The Hindustan Times, 17-12-1931

245. *A MANIFESTO*[1]

[On or before *December 5, 1931*]

The Congress demands Complete Independence, including full control of defence forces, External Affairs and Finance, not excluding equal partnership with Britain determinable at the instance of either party, subject to the discharge or adjustment of mutual obligations.

Safeguards

The Congress will accept safeguards necessary in the interests of India and is willing to take over all legitimate obligations, subject to examination by an impartial tribunal. The Congress is committed to a purely national solution of the question of minorities but will, if necessary, accept the principle of special reservation of seats in legislature for Muslims and Sikhs as a necessary evil for historical reasons.

Untouchables

The cause of untouchables will be the special care of the Congress, and it would be unjust to treat them separately and thus give untouchability a legal status when every attempt is being made to abolish the evil altogether.

[1] The source says this was a parting manifesto by Gandhiji issued by the Commonwealth of India League. Since no other version is available, it cannot be ascertained whether this was the complete text or only portions taken from the document.

No Racial Discrimination

No political disability will be placed on anyone on the ground of race, creed or colour and, the Congress being wedded to adult franchise, there should be no difficulty in representatives of any adult minority getting elected to the legislatures on the strength of national service.

The Hindustan Times, 9-12-1931

246. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS[1]

London,
December 5, 1931

Mr. Gandhi said that the Commons debate was a distinct victory not only for the Government but for responsibility at the Centre and the Provinces.

But I fear that the vote does not carry the Indian position very far. What was outlined in the Declaration and emphasized in the debate is far short of real responsibility. The House of Commons vote lands us again in unreality.

The Hindu, 6-12-1931

247. INTERVIEW TO REUTER[2]

Folkestone,
December 5, 1931

The English people should believe me when I say that, if it falls to my lot to fight them, I will be engaged in the fight, never out of hatred but most surely out of love, even as I have fought some of my dearest relations. Hence I am determined to make every effort to continue co-operation as far as it is consistent with national self-respect.

I must, however, confess that the more I study the Bengal Ordinance the more I am filled with misgivings of the gravest character. Bad as is the section which makes possible the infliction of capital punishment for attempted murder, there are other sections which are infinitely worse.

We can afford to make a present of a few innocent heads, but it is impossible to contemplate with equanimity the unmanning

[1] Gandhiji gave the interview just before leaving London.

[2] Gandhiji gave this interview just before embarking on the steamer, *The Maid of Kent*.

of the whole people. I am hoping, therefore, that the British will study the Ordinance and insist on the withdrawal of what to me is inhuman exercise of political power.

He added that he had always asked Indians to fight for liberty without hatred against the English. As a result of his visit to England, he felt it more incumbent on him now to impress on his fellow-countrymen that they should have no bitterness against the English.

The Hindustan Times, 7-12-1931

248. INTERVIEW TO "BRISTOL EVENING NEWS"

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

My last words to England must be: Farewell and beware! I came a seeker after peace. I return fearful of war. I do not want war, but I fear that circumstances are driving me towards it. I should not be surprised to find myself in prison within a month of my return to India. . . .[1]

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

249. ANSWER TO QUESTION[2]

December 5, 1931

Q. Why do you refuse to enter God's house if Jesus invites you? Why does not India take up the Cross?

A. If Jesus has reference to God, I have never refused to enter the house of God; indeed, every moment I am trying to enter it. If Jesus represents not a person, but the principle of non-violence, India has accepted its protecting power.

Young India, 31-12-1931

[1] The paragraphs that follow in the source were almost wholly taken from Gandhiji's speech at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference on December 1.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "The Jesus I love". The question was asked at a Paris meeting.

250. SPEECH AT RECEPTION[1]

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

I do not at all regret having attended the Round Table Conference. I should have been ashamed of having gone there if I had compromised by an iota India's demand. I am thankful that God gave me the strength to speak the right word at the right moment, and I am not ashamed of anything that I have said or done there. I am returning home much stronger and wiser. For I know now the people we have to contend against. I know that we have to go through still more suffering to vindicate our position.

Young India, 31-12-1931

251. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING[2]

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

We had started a battle and in its midst signed a truce for negotiations which were not successful. But nothing is lost now because I have ascertained the character and tactics of those with whom we have to fight so that in future we shall make no mistakes. In battles, misfortunes are normal and so we must continue with greater zest and determination and must face suffering for the freedom of our country. To those of you who are living in Paris and in other parts of Europe, my plea is that you strive always to present to the world all that is best in India and her cause. Strive always to draw the attention of the world to the real nature

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe". The reception was organized by the Indians residing in Paris. Desai says the speech was made in Hindi.

[2] The meeting, organized by the local intellectuals, was held in the afternoon and was attended by about 2,000 persons. Entry was by tickets. The full text of the speech is not available. What follows was addressed to the Indians in the audience. The questions put to Gandhiji at the end of the meeting were mostly from Frenchmen.

of India's struggle. I cannot tell you just at this moment the temper of our people in the country. But I can tell you that, when I get back, they will be ready to put up a fresh fight. What we want for our country is control of the army and the purse and it can certainly be obtained if only we are prepared to suffer and be perfectly non-violent. I shall ask our countrymen once again to obtain it by suffering. Disobedience is not violence, but disobedience means further suffering.

Q. When do you think India will be definitely freed?

A. I am not sufficiently all-knowing to answer this question, or to make any prediction which is known only to God.

Q. If India were suddenly freed, would she not, considering the ignorance of the majority of the people, be at the mercy of a handful of intellectuals?

A. Possibly, but in any case it would be preferable for her to be led for a certain time by a group of intellectuals rather than to be under the thumb of demagogic leaders as in the West.

Q. Won't you do anything to lighten the misery of Lancashire?

A. Yes, of course, I shall try my best.

Q. If India were freed, would you set up economic barriers? Would you permit commercial exchange with France?

A. No, I should not oppose commercial exchange. But I must tell you that, when India is free, she will give commercial privileges to England rather than to any other country. All the same permit me to say that France will interest us quite a good deal.

Q. Does the happiness of man reside in knowledge or in ignorance?

A. In neither. It resides in each man himself and in the search of perfection and truth.

Q. Are all men capable of seeking perfection?

A. Yes, they have it in themselves.

Q. Are you satisfied with Mr. MacDonald's Declaration?

A. I must say that, although I am not satisfied, I have great hope despite the fact that I may seem to be returning empty-handed.

Q. A few years ago, I saw you dressed in European clothes. Why have you abandoned them?

A. I am poor, and like thousands of Indians, I do not allow myself to wear European clothes. First, because they are too dear.

Secondly, because they are quite unsuited to the climate of my country and, lastly, because it provides work for our Indian workers if we wear Indian clothes.

Q. Supposing there were a fresh warlike mobilization in Europe, do you think that it would be possible to avoid war by the non-co-operation of military forces and of the people?

A. Non-co-operation in the case of war is everywhere possible and it is by this that universal peace will be obtained. According to other things, women, who are usually called the feeble sex, will then have the opportunity of showing their power by supporting non-co-operation and non-violence.

Q. Would it be right to allow oneself to be killed without putting up a fight?

A. In either case it would be a question of sacrificing one's life. For one who has decided to do this it would be better to remain passive under the law of non-violence than arm oneself with "exterior" arms and kill another besides being killed oneself. In an emergency of this kind, one should arm oneself internally, the internal spiritual forces are stronger and induce a more certain and lasting life. It is not by arming yourself that you will guarantee peace to the world. External arms, guns, cannons and gas have only evil and passing results. One puts down one's arms only when a respite is essential with the intention of resuming later. By using non-violence as their only weapon thousands of men will arm themselves intellectually and spiritually, with the principles which are in action during day and night and will attain this end and succeed in arousing the sympathy of the Englishmen.

Q. If India were free, what would be her attitude towards Soviet Russia?

A. I am so preoccupied with my own country that I must admit that I am rather ignorant of what concerns the Russian people. All the same I can tell you that, when India is free, she might well imitate what there is of good in Russia. If Russia becomes a little more spiritual, all would be perfect with her.

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-12-1931

252. ANSWER TO QUESTION[1]

[On or after *December 5, 1931*][2]

In the method we are adopting in India, fraud, lying, deceit and all the ugly brood of violence and untruth have absolutely no room. Everything is done openly and above board, for truth hates secrecy. The more open you are the more truthful you are likely to be. There is no such thing as defeat or despair in the dictionary of a man who bases his life on truth and non-violence. And yet the method of non-violence is not in any shape or form a passive or inactive method. It is essentially an active movement, much more active than the one involving the use of sanguinary weapons. Truth and non-violence are perhaps the activest forces you have in the world. A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is intent upon destroying those whom he considers his enemies does at least require some rest and has to lay down his arms for a while in every twenty-four hours. He is, therefore, essentially inactive, for a certain part of the day. Not so the votary of truth and non-violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast and they are actively working their way whether you are awake or whether you are asleep, whether you are walking leisurely or playing an active game. The panoplied warrior of truth and non-violence is ever and incessantly active.

Young India, 31-12-1931

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe". Desai has summarized together answers to questions put to Gandhiji at meetings in Paris and Lausanne. Most of these are covered under the items that immediately follow. This, however, is not available from any other source.

[2] The meetings in Paris were on December 5 and those in Lausanne on December 8.

253. DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND[1]

VILLENEUVE,
December 6, 1931

GANDHIJI : I would have to take Scarperl[2] literally and what I would want to do is to speak in their presence to the people the very things I should speak out.

ROMAIN ROLLAND : Then you should have with you American reporters.

G. It would be against my nature to make these arrangements beforehand.

R. R. They will surround you with people, English and American, who are Fascists. Your voice must break the cordon for the people of Italy.

G. I would make it a condition also that I would not like to speak to them about neutral matters. This visit has come to me unsought. Let us take it for granted that in Italian Press every word will be distorted. In Free England too my words were distorted and message boycotted. In France too wild things have been written in *Figaro*.

R. R. The other danger. You will speak, but others will speak against you and you will not understand it.

G. I would do my duty and leave the results.

R. R. You have a duty to speak to the poor people.

G. I feel that it is impossible for any person to take these meticulous precautions.

R. R. Always you must have someone with you.

G. The immediate effect will be that Italian Press will misrepresent me, but the distant effect of a good word spoken or a good thing shown must be good. We must run the risk provided we are sure that I would not fall a prey to temptation.

R. R. You will meet intellectuals—people with intellectual mask, but not the people like Formichi, Gentile, etc.

G. I saw your great pain and I realized with what enormous labours you had reached your conclusions on the situation.

[1] For an account of Gandhiji's visit to Villeneuve; *vide* Appendix II.
[2] It had been suggested that Gandhiji should visit Italy and see the Pope and Mussolini.

On the other hand I have been built differently. Whatever conclusions I have reached have not been through historical studies at all. History has played the least part in my make. A scoffer would say that I have been empirical in my methods and all my conclusions are based on my so-called experience. I call it so-called because there is a danger of self-delusion. I know many lunatics who believe in certain things as if they were their own experiences. But he has some belief as regards his wife and children, and it is impossible to dislodge him from what he calls his experience and the dividing line between his experience and mine may be very thin. Nevertheless my experience has precedents. Saints have based their institutions on experiences and, after all, the world now believes that the experiences they had recorded were correct and also that they had been tested by the historical and analytical methods. My experience has not altogether been baseless and the whole experience regarding non-violence and non-co-operation has a foundation of this character and so, whilst I was listening to yesterday's penetrating discourse, I said, "How can I react to this?" I said: "I should say such is my faith and I must work for it." It was an awful problem. Whilst non-violence may work in India, it may not answer at all in Europe. It does not baffle me for the simple reason that I should not be able to deliver the message of non-violence to Europe, expect that it may percolate through India. I may never be able to deliver such a message, but God may have many things in store for me. I have met many enlightened Englishmen and also foreigners and I have said that you must not move unless you have faith to such an extent that you would have faith in you even if the world was against you; and you will then have ways and means coming to your rescue. It is, therefore, my firm belief that non-violence alone will save Europe; otherwise I see nothing but perdition. A process of disintegration is going on in front of me. Things in Russia may be a puzzle. I have spoken least about Russia, but deep down in me I am full of the profound distrust of things happening in Russia. It seems to be a challenge to non-violence. Just now it seems to be working well, but the basis is force. I do not know how long that force is going to be effective in keeping that society, that country to this narrow path. The Indians who are under the influence of Russian methods are betraying intolerance of an extreme type. The result is that those who are under it are under a system of terrorism. So I follow the Russian experiment with a fundamental distrust. I have cross-questioned every Englishman and American who has been to Russia. They have

seemed to me to be impartial observers. The other day Lord Lothian and Bernard Shaw went to Russia. Lothian's testimony is decidedly that he does not know how far force is going to re-mould society. Bernard Shaw has written enthusiastically. In his conversation with me, I missed that enthusiasm and I did not draw him out completely. On the contrary he was interested in Indian matters. So I see that even for Europe there is need for non-violence. It needs no big organization. It somehow or other organizes itself. There ought to be at the head someone who is non-violent in character, with faith immovable as a mountain, and so long as this man has not come to the surface we must wait and watch and pray.

R. R. I sent you letters addressed to Runham Brown. Non-resistance will be successful in the distant future. But the question is immediate. In 20 years European civilization may perish. I have doubts about the method of non-violence. In 20 years' time everything would be decided. What should we do in the interval?

G. I said somewhat to this effect. The world is really idolatrous. Islam is idolatrous, and so is Protestant Christianity. It wants to see something through one of the five senses. That is what I call idolatry. It wants an ocular demonstration and, if India can successfully give the demonstration, the thing becomes easy. I am clear India should not need 20 years and, if India can come to real freedom through non-violence the world would know non-violence, and then the whole world would take it. I want to develop world opinion so that England will be ashamed to do the wrong thing. But whether that can come about, or whether this war others will fight or not, I do not, know. But I am certain that out of intense non-violence only good can come. There is no doubt about it that English opinion has undergone a revolutionary change—not to a satisfactory degree. I attribute it to non-violence. Some brilliant Englishmen—Gilbert Murray [for instance]—do not agree and don't make admission. I do not want it. The thing is there and anyone can see that, but for the fight of non-violence, the so-called R.T.C. would not have met. So I have a hope that after we have gone through . . .[1] I should have no difficulty in covering the rest of the ground. I know the difference, but I cannot lose faith. I have to build on the self-dedication of the few who have given their lives to it. The same thing happened to me in South Africa. The same thing happened in India where I did not know that I could give a definite battle. We would be

[1] A few words that follow are not clear in the source.

able to give that battle. Beyond that I am not able to suggest anything further. If you can deal with the Indian situation in the correct manner, the European will be and cannot but be corrected.

R. R. Non-resistance has been applied in some cases, but our difficulties are double and triple. Indians have been ill-treated, but I do not think that they have been as ill-treated as [people in] Italy. Forced exploitation through work by children. There must be a gospel to preach to the miserable people.

In Russia you must know what the conditions were. What could non-violence do in Russia? Have we the right to ask them to be non-violent to Europe? Should we force them to yield to Europe?

G. With reference to European proletariat, the relations between employers and employed were fairly happy. But I said that the remedy did not come through giving battle to capitalists but in giving battle to themselves. They would then become their own employers. They look to capital to find their labour. If the capitalists gave them all the capital, they would not be happy and they could not make use of it even for one full year. I said to them, therefore, "revive your cottage industry". It is being adopted in Wales. Brave, stalwart minds and majority of them unemployed —and unemployment will increase as oil wells increase. Not one of them should be living upon doles.

R. R. The danger in Europe is in a large middle class which lives in comfort at the expense of others. After the War France was told Germany would pay. In France they are trying to prepare an Asiatic Army and go back to the times of the Roman Empire.

India is right—you are acting in the interest of mankind. Poverty has not yet come to France, though it has come to Germany. Our part is to be with the oppressed.

G. There, too, does not the remedy lie with the oppressed? If they ceased to co-operate with the exploiter, deliverance would come.

Those who have no deep religious feeling are tempted by salaries and material comforts. World's greatest works are chemical industries which have for their object violence. The gospel of poverty and self-abnegation must be preached.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

254. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

VILLENEUVE,
December 6, 1931

Replying to questions he said that he had nothing to add to what he had said before his departure from London. He flatly denied the report from London in a Geneva newspaper that the Indians would resort to violence if their wishes were not realized. He said personally he would give his life to prevent this.

Asked with regard to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's statement in the House of Commons, Mr. Gandhi said that he would like to hear the views of the Congress before making pronouncement on the statement. His message to the people of India was that they should come to no hasty conclusion, but await his statement for the people.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-12-1931

255. EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

[VILLENEUVE,
On or after *December 6, 1931*][1]

If the situation in India does not force a quarrel, co-operation might still be continued. Anyway, I can give you the assurance that I shall do nothing in haste or without first approaching the Viceroy.

Halifax, p. 317

256. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

VILLENEUVE,
December 7, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I am reducing in writing the gist of our last conversation. You were good enough to say that neither the Prime Minister's declaration nor your speech in the House of Commons were the

[1] According to the source the letter was written from Villeneuve where Gandhiji arrived on December 6.

last word on Safeguards or Reservations, and that it would be open to any member of the proposed Working Committee to suggest amendments or the removal of any of them as also to press forward the important investigation of the financial transaction to be taken over by the National Government. You also said that whatever you would be sending to the Working Committee for consideration would not be merely formal, but that the Working Committee's recommendations would receive the greatest consideration from His Majesty's Government. If this is the correct impression, I would like you, if you don't mind, to confirm it by Air Mail. My address in India would be Ahmedabad.

Yours sincerely,

The Hindu, 1-2-1932

257. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

C/o M. R. ROLLAND,
VILLENEUVE,
December 7, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I had told you I wanted to write to you about the police arrangements that were made by the Government regarding myself. I get the time to do so only today. Whilst all the detectives and the constables who were told off for the work showed extreme care and courtesy in the discharge of their duties, Sergeants Evans and Rogers who came in daily contact with me became as it were members of the family. They looked after me with brotherly care and affection. You were kind enough to send them at my request as far as Brindisi. They are proving themselves extraordinarily useful even in these foreign parts. I shall always be glad to hear that they are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9385. Courtesy: India Office Library

258. *ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS*[1]

LAUSANNE,
December 8, 1931

Q. How can East and West be brought together to work for peace?

A. This question was asked me some 5 years ago. And this was my answer: I, who belong to a subject nation, did not know how I could work for peace except by working for freedom, and if India could be helped to win freedom through peaceful means, it would be a very good combination for peace. I have said this after having attempted the deliverance of my country through absolutely non-violent and truthful means.

Q. Must we admit that, parallel to the use of non-violence in India, there should be a movement here also for use of non-violence for political ends?

A. If you are convinced that the means adopted in India are day by day bringing about the results we desire, and if you are convinced that India is doing so through spiritual means, then do so here too. Though there is greater difference in Europe.

Friends have told me there were special difficulties in Europe to adopt non-violent means. Europe consists of martial races unlike India. Here all know how to wield arms. All the male population has at one time or another wielded arms. It is difficult for you to understand the efficacy and beauty of non-retaliation. Why not punish the wrongdoer—and in an exemplary manner?—that is what is asked everywhere here. Thus non-violence is quite foreign to Europe. For people belonging to such a country it is difficult to strike out a new path. Your economic life is so constructed that it is not possible, generally speaking, for an ordinary man to get out of the ordinary rut unless he faces poverty. And the fourth difficulty is that in Catholic Europe the iron discipline allows very little free play to the intellect. These are the four difficulties we have not to face in India which you have to face. If India becomes free through non-violent means, it won't enter upon war. But if she does, God will give me strength to fight India single-handed.

Q. What do you think of Einstein's call to military people not to take part in war?

[1] Although the source does not mention the occasion of the questions, these were presumably put at the very first meeting Gandhiji addressed at Lausanne.

A. My answer can only be one. That, if Europe can take up this method enthusiastically like me, I can only say Einstein has stolen the method from me. But if you want me to elaborate the thing, I would like to elaborate the method a little deeper. To refuse to render military service when a particular individual's time comes is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is practically gone. The disease is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the Register for military service are equally participating in the crime. He or she, therefore, who supports a State so organized is, whether directly or indirectly, participating in the sin. It is fraught with immediate danger. Seeing that each man, old or young, takes part in this sin by contributing to the State (by paying the tax to the State) I said so long as I ate wheat supplied by the Navy, whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to be shot; otherwise I should go to the mountains and eat food grown by nature. Similarly, all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all military co-operation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-co-operation with a whole system which supports the State. But then your opportunity becomes so swift and so effective that you run the risk of not only being marched to jail, but of being thrown on the street. This was the position of Tolstoy.

Q. Are we not allowed to accept the State? Should we even refuse local self-government (including public works, schools, etc.)?

A. Now you have touched the tenderest spot in human nature. This question touched me as author of non-co-operation in the initial stage. And before I could make up my mind, I said to myself: I co-operate with the State in two ways. There is no State, run either by Nero or Mussolini, which has no good points about it. We have in India what is called the Grand Trunk Road. It provides facility for millions of travellers; well-equipped hospitals, grand palaces built for schools. These we may consider to be good points. But I said, if the whole thing crushes the nation, I should not have anything to do with them. They are like the snake with a jewel but with poison fangs. So I came to the conclusion that British rule in India had stunted the nation and so I denied myself all the privileges. The gentlemanly way was to deny them.

The plea of self-defence is a wretched plea. You organize your country and society to prey upon ill-organized communities and nations. It is a bad thing. . . .[1] What Einstein has said would

[1] Some words here are not clear in the source.

occur only once in a year and only with a very few people. But your first duty is to non-co-operate with the State.

Q. Is there so deep a difference between a man in India and subjects of other countries which are free? Could not we say that our position is different from yours before we can quarrel with our State?

A. Difference there undoubtedly is. As a member of a subject nation I could best help by shaking rid of my subjection. Here I am asked how best to get out of military mentality. You are enjoying amenities on condition that you render military service to the State. There you have to rid the State of military mentality. But you are in a hopeless minority. A State that rests on military violence is a bad State. You will then say that a majority of people are like that. They are. In examining the efficacy of the method I am able to draw a distinction between a free State and a subject State. If you want the minority to become a majority, you will have to deny the privileges.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

259. SPEECH AT MEETING IN LAUSANNE[1]

December 8, 1931

FRIENDS,

Let me say how overwhelmed I have felt by the kindness of which I have been the recipient ever since I have been in your beautiful city. If earthly beauty can make a paradise, you are indeed living in a paradise. I come from a land where God has showered His choicest gift in the shape of earthly beauty. There is nothing grander you can find in all the earth than the beauty you can find in the uttermost extremity of India—Travancore—and yet as the train was slowly gliding by your beautiful lake and as we passed the villages so beautifully clean, I could not but be entranced by the sublimity of the beauty. And when I came here, I enjoyed and drank deep the beauty of your affection. I could trace your affection in the many searching and relevant questions put to me, where I had heart-to-heart talks and, now to crown all

[1] The source does not specify which meeting this was. But Mahadev Desai in his "Letter from Europe", published in *Young India*, 31-12-1931, says this was the Conscientious Objectors' meeting organized by Pierre Ceresole and his friends and was held in a church. The speech and the answers to questions that followed were translated by Edmond Privat and Prof. Bovet.

in this house of God, you have commenced your bombardment by a question which has been occupying me—the whole of my being—for nearly 50 years.

You have asked me why I consider that God is Truth. In my early childhood or youth, I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures is one thousand names of God. Among the several little things one of the religious teachers my family had was a little pamphlet which contained these thousand names of God. But these thousand names of God were by no means an exhaustive list. We believe—and I think it is the truth—that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider him formless, and since he speaks to me through many tongues we consider him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam, I found that Islam too had many names, but I had not come to recognize God for my personal satisfaction as Truth. I would say for those who say God is love, God is love. But deep down in me I say God may be love, but God is Truth. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, for myself I have come to the conclusion that God is Truth. But two years ago I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements: God is Truth and Truth is God. And that conclusion I came to after a continuous, relentless search after Truth which began so many years ago. I found that the nearest approach to Truth is through love. But I found also that love has many meanings, in the English language at least, and human love in the sense of passion becomes a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of ahimsa and non-violence has only a limited number of votaries in the world. And as I made progress in my search, I made no dispute with "God is love". It is very difficult to understand "God is love" (because of a variety of meanings of love) but I never found a double meaning in connection with Truth and not even atheists have denied the necessity or power of Truth. Not only so. In their passion for discovering Truth, they have not hesitated even to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of their reasoning that I saw that I was not going to say "God is Truth", but "Truth is God". Therefore I recall the name of Charles Bradlaugh—a great Englishman who lived 50 years ago. He delighted to call himself an atheist. But knowing as I do something of his life, I never considered him an atheist. I would call him a godfearing man although he would reject the claim, and I know his face would redden. I would

say: No Mr. Bradlaugh, you are a truth-fearing man, not a god-fearing man, and I would disarm his criticisms by saying "Truth is God" as I have disarmed criticisms of many a young man. Add to this the great difficulty that millions have taken the name of God and have committed nameless atrocities in the name of God. Not that scientists do not very often commit cruelties in the name of Truth. I know today in the name of Truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection. To me it is a denial of God whether you recognize Him as Truth or by any other name. So I know that there are these difficulties in one's way no matter how you describe God. But human mind is a limited thing, and you have to labour under limitation when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp. But we have another thing in Hindu philosophy, viz., God alone is and nothing else exists. Now the same truth you find emphasized and exemplified in the *kalama* of Islam. There you find it clearly stated—a Mussalman has to recite it at all his prayers—that God alone is and nothing else is and that is the same about Truth. And the name that Sanskrit has for Truth literally means that which is—*Sat*. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition "Truth is God" gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, non-violence—and since I believe that ultimately means and ends are convertible terms I should not hesitate to say that God is love.

Q. What is Truth?

A. A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells one. How then, you ask, different people think of different and contrary truths?

Seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to making experiments. Just as for science there is an indispensable course common for all, even so it is true for persons who would make experiments in the spiritual realm—they must submit to certain conditions. And since everybody says it is his inner voice which speaks, you must listen to the voice, and you will then find out your limitations as you go along the path. Therefore, we have the belief based upon uninterrupted experience that those who would

make diligent search after Truth—God—must go through these vows: the vow of truth—speaking and thinking of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya*, of non-violence, poverty and non-possession. If you do not take these five vows you may not embark on the experiment. There are several other things which were prescribed, but I must not take you through all those. But those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to hear the voice of conscience and it is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All therefore that I can in all humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero. Further than this I may not tonight go along this fascinating path.

Q. What do you think of Christianity?

A. A delicate question. Christianity is very good; many Christians are very bad.

The economic crisis can be relieved if people love poverty. I would ask you to emphasize the word 'love' here. There would be no economic crisis if they really loved poverty. Economic crises arise because our eyes lust after the property of our neighbour. Forced poverty is to be found on earth simply because many have more than they are entitled to. There would be no poverty on earth if we made a sacred resolution that we would have no more than we need for our creature comforts. And it would not do for a millionaire to sluggishly say that he owns millions because he needs those for his creature comforts. On the contrary, a man who is poor will continually examine himself and find out what are the superfluous things he keeps for himself and, if you conduct yourself in a sportsmanlike spirit from day to day, you will be astounded at the fewness of things you require.

I would like very much, being in the House of God, to say: cast out the beam from your eye before you dare to see a mote in your neighbour's eye. If we would but be good enough to take care of ourselves, I have very little doubt that the world would take care of itself.

Q. What is your message to the women of Europe?

A. I do not know if I have the courage to give the message without incurring their wrath. I would direct their steps to the women of India who rose in one mass last year and I really believe, if India would drink in the nectar of non-violence, Europe would

do it through women. Woman I hold is the personification of self-sacrifice, but unfortunately today women do not realize what a tremendous advantage they hold over men. As Tolstoy would say, they are labouring under the hypnotic influence of man. If they would realize the nobility of non-violence, they would not consent to be called the weaker sex.

Tolstoy and Ruskin renewed my faith in things which I had only darkly felt.

Q. What is the difference between non-resistance and your resistance without violence?

A. It has been often said that the doctrine of non-violence I owe to Tolstoy. It is not the whole truth, but there again I derive the greatest strength from his writings. But as Tolstoy himself admitted, the non-resistance method I had cultivated and elaborated in South Africa was different from the non-resistance Tolstoy had written upon and recommended. This I say in no derogation of Tolstoy's fame. He is not an apt pupil who will not build upon foundations laid by his teacher for him. He only deserves a good teacher who would add to the legacy that teacher would leave for him. I should be an unworthy son to my father if I should not add to my inheritance, and so I have always regarded it as a matter of pride that, thanks be to God, what I had learned from Tolstoy has fructified a hundredfold. Tolstoy talked of passive resistance largely, but non-resistance elaborated in Transvaal was a force infinitely more active than resistance that an armed man can devise and, I am glad to recall the fact that in a long letter he wrote to me unsolicited he said that his eyes were fixed upon me wherever I was. And if you will study the movements in South Africa and India, you will find how this thing is capable of infinite expansion.

Q. Is not non-resistance submission?

A. Passive resistance is regarded as the weapon of the weak but the resistance for which I had to coin a new name altogether for want of a phrase in the English language and not to have this mixed up with non-resistance, namely, 'satyagraha', is not conceived in any shape or form as a weapon of the weak but as a weapon of the strongest. But its matchless beauty is that it can be wielded by the weak in body, [by the] oldest and even by children if they have strong hearts and, since resistance through satyagraha is offered through self-suffering, it is a weapon open pre-eminently to women. And we found in actual experience in India last year that women in many instances surpassed men in suffering. And chil-

dren also —thousands—played a noble part in this campaign. For the idea of self-suffering became contagious and they embarked upon amazing acts of self-denial. Supposing that women of Europe and children of Europe became fired with love of humanity and said our men are doing wrong by arming, they would take them by storm and reduce militarism to nothingness in an incredibly short time. And the underlying idea is that children, women and others have the same identical soul, same potentiality. The question is of drawing out the limitless power of Truth. But I must again call a halt to this fascinating subject.

Q. What is the value of vegetarian diet?

A. Priceless value for me, not for beef-eating Europe. But I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage—an inexorable demand—that we should cease to kill our fellow-creatures for satisfaction of our bodily wants. The beautiful lines of Goldsmith occur to me as I tell you of my vegetarian fad:

> No flocks that range the valley free
> To slaughter I condemn;
> Taught by the Power that pities me
> I learn to pity them.

Q. What about liquor?

A. Liquor is as we say an invention of the devil. In Islam it is said that when Satan began to beguile men and women, he dangled before them this red water. I have seen that it has not only robbed men of their money but of reason; they have for the time being forgotten the distinction between wife and mother, lawful and unlawful. See barristers rotting in gutters, taken home by the police. I have found on two occasions captains of steamers dead drunk, incapable of keeping charge of their boats, and someone else had to take charge before they came to their senses. For both flesh and liquor the sovereign rule is: we must not live in order to eat and drink and be merry but eat in order to make our bodies temples of God and to use them for the service of man. Liquor may be a medical necessity; when life is extinct, it may be possible to prolong it. It is possible to keep perfect health without flesh or meat. If you want to develop cruelty in a soldier, he would not have it unless he takes flesh or meat. You may not know that Japan, when she took to imitating Western civilization, made beef-eating compulsory.

Q. Is non-co-operation in military matters balanced by service in non-military matters?

A. That must be the last question. It is a good question. This was very exhaustively dealt with at the first meeting of a few friends. Briefly, I entirely agree that both these services go hand in hand. Non-co-operation in military service and service in non-military matters is not compatible. Friendly relations may be cultivated. Definitely military service is an ill-chosen word. Because you are all the while giving military service by deputy because you are supporting a State which is based on military service. In the Transvaal we had this law. There were some who were debarred—Indians, Bantus, Zulus—by law. But they were obliged to pay money. They were commuting that service. You will have to extend the scope of non-co-operation, how I shall not say. There is no limit to extending service to our neighbours across our State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

260. SPEECH AT MEETING IN LAUSANNE[1]

December 8, 1931

I know I had in this great Continent of yours quite a large number of friends. In order to make that pilgrimage to Villeneuve to see Romain Rolland I had to miss one steamer and, having come here, I shall say the same thing I said to Paris citizens. I observe that throughout the West there is a sickness of heart; you seem to be tired of the military burden under which the world is groaning—and I see that you are tired of shedding the blood of fellow-men. The last War, falsely called great, has taught you and humanity many a great lesson. Human nature during that War did not by any means shine at its best. No fraud, no lie, no deceit was considered to be too much in order to win the War. Foulest charges were flung by a set of partisans belonging to one nation against another and these were reciprocated with double vehemence. No cruelty was considered too great. Nothing was considered base or mean in order to compass the destruction of the enemy. Suddenly as in a flash the friends of yesterday became the enemy of today. No honour was safe, nothing was spared, and historians tell us that there never was so much blood spilled as during the last War. This civilization of the West was weighed

[1] Gandhiji addressed three meetings in Lausanne. The source does not mention which one this was. But from a very brief report in *The Hindustan Times*, 11-12-1931, it would appear this was the one held at People's Hall.

in the balance and found wanting and you have hardly risen from the deadly effects of that War. On the contrary, you are slowly and surely realizing the evil effect of war in a more and more concentrated form. Most of the nations are on the brink of insolvency—a direct result of the War. You are suffering not only from material bankruptcy but moral and we are yet too near the time of the War to be able to measure the frightfulness bequeathed to us, nor was evil confined to Europe. It has broken the bounds and travelled round to Asia and no one knows whether he is standing on his feet or head.

At this time there is a message of hope coming from India. India is trying to attain its liberty through non-violent and truthful means. She has been endeavouring to follow out these means during the last ten years. Tens of thousands have taken part in this movement. Those who have studied the movement have come to the conclusion that it is making a steady headway. I suggest to you that if India can give an ocular demonstration of the fact that India can win liberty without shedding a drop of blood, it would be a great lesson for the world. You have been trying to discover a moral equilibrium for war. It is possible that the method that India has adopted is the exact equilibrium for war. I know it is as yet too early to say anything with confidence about this method. But my plea tonight is that you should study the Indian movement and methods. I invite you not to study the movement as biased friends but as candid critics. Approach it as behoves good students, study the movement with impartiality and, if you come to the conclusion that it is honestly conducted with non-violence and peaceful means, throw yourselves heart and soul into the movement. There is no doubt in my mind that you can do so. You can mould the public opinion of Europe—world opinion—so that it becomes irresistible. Naturally a movement of non-violence creates a favourable public opinion; it speaks through self-suffering of a whole people. But I must not go any further. I have endeavoured yet just to whet your appetite. The limit of this meeting is 45 minutes and as is my wont I want to leave a fair portion of my time for questions. I would therefore invite you to put whatever questions you like.

Q. [You are reported to have said that] if necessary the masses of India will resort to violence. [Is that correct?]

A. I have no hesitation in saying that it is a baseless fabrication. It is a matter of deep grief that journalists so debase themselves as to give currency to lies. I do not for a moment sug-

gest that the editor of the paper was giving currency to a lie. But the reporter himself was a journalist and the blame lies on his shoulder, but I would now suggest for the honour of journalism that, having heard the statement attributed to me, you should correspond with the reporter and deal with him as one would deal with a servant who behaves faithlessly.

Q. Mr. Gandhi, did you really advise people to enlist in army and to shoot in the air?

A. This is another fabrication. A question like this was put to me in Paris and I said that a soldier who enlisted himself and flattered himself that he was shooting in the air did no credit to his creed of non-violence. In my scheme a man who did this would be guilty of untruth and also of cowardice—cowardice inasmuch as he enlisted in order to escape imprisonment and untruth inasmuch as he having enlisted did not fire. This discredits the cause of war against war. War Resisters have to be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. Their strength lies in absolute adherence to the morality of the question.

I wish I had influence enough on Hindu society and I should suggest complete surrender to Muslims and Sikhs. It is a most difficult thing to deal with men who are afraid of one another. We have become so emasculated and so unnerved that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fear and suspect one another and persons seized with fear and distrust do not spare one another. That is our pitiful position.

The method of non-co-operation and non-violence is not only advisable, but one who is convinced of the injustice of war is bound to offer non-violent non-co-operation even if he or she be the only person.

Q. What is your opinion about mechanism? Why do you suppress it?

A. By mechanism you mean this tremendous activity based on machinery. What I want to suppress is the supremacy of machine over man. At the present moment the craze for everything to be done by machine has become so great that we are becoming slaves of machinery. Machinery is used for two purposes: (i) for compassing destruction, and (ii) for mass production. I drew your attention to the fact that this economic distress was due to the late War, but this mass production is no less responsible for this economic distress.

Q. Love for God or love for man?

A. This is a question which begs itself. Love for God is not to be distinct from love for man. But if there was a conflict bet-

ween the two loves I would know there was a conflict in the man himself. I should therefore invite him to carry on a search within himself. But when you find love for man divorced from love for God, you will find at basis a base motive. Real love for man I regard to be utterly impossible without love for God.

Q. How is one to fight hypocrisy and slander?

A. By not noticing either.

The movement has never been outside the inspiration of God —apart from that inspiration I regard myself unfit to conduct a movement of a world-wide character. I have never considered myself responsible for any of the achievements of the movement. But, being a weak instrument in the hands of God, I have always considered myself responsible for any evil effects of the movement. But I did not go in search of the movement; it came directly to me from God. I know from experience that without a living faith in God conduct of the movement would be impossible.

Q. Why don't you come to Germany which is suffering so much?

A. I would have loved to come, but the time-table is against it. My heart was in Germany: is in Germany. But I have been simply powerless.

Q. Can Egypt gain her liberty?

A. *J'ai mes doutes*. If India becomes independent, Egypt becomes independent automatically. India becoming independent is such a huge and far-reaching event that every country will pulsate with a new life. It will be a great and glorious thing.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

261. *DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND*

VILLENEUVE,
December 9, 1931

GANDHIJI : I believe and don't believe in the sincerity of MacDonald, as in a sense he means to stand by the declaration he has made, but he must also know that the declaration does not mean responsibility at the Centre and yet he says it contains responsibility at the Centre and wants you to believe what is not true. There is another sense also in which he has appeared to me as insincere—not open but evasive in his conversation—and so I could not form an altogether good opinion of him. He carries a responsibility on

his shoulders which he can ill afford to bear. He is overworked, and in me he has a difficult subject to deal with. He finds me a fighter; on the other hand, my demand seems to be pitched so high that he cannot circumvent me and so he gives me the idea of an insincere man. It may be weakness and not insincerity.

ROMAIN ROLLAND : He wrote beautifully about India.

G. His views are favourable even today, but then he had no responsibility. Today he has.

R. R. His statement was impertinent. Your last speech at R.T.C. has much moved many people.

G. "Extraordinary speech openly inspired by Bolshevik ideas." That was the speech at the Federal Structure Committee on commercial discrimination. It did create consternation among my friends.

I said I or Congress would not discriminate against a person because he was an Englishman, but there would be discrimination on other grounds, and I presented him with the formula: any interest in conflict with the national interest or not legitimately acquired, I said, would be taken over by the State and I said that it would apply to Europeans of India. This, I said, would not be done by an executive order but by the order from the Federal Court.

[The Ordinance] is an inhuman document, worse than the Rowlatt Act. The menace to the Government of India from its own subordinates is of a different character. They disregarded instructions of a liberal nature, which are rare, but they are ready to carry out all instructions of a destructive character. Whereas the Central power is not able to exact discipline. I have called the Civil Service of India the greatest political freemasonry. The Secret Service is nothing before this snake-like coil of Civil Service. . . .

R. R. The German youth is quite different from what he was before War. Before War they believed in the concrete value of power. They have seen it crushed. The new youth lives in a state of relativism—no wonder they come from Einstein's place. To the German youth France seems to be a country of old values, so that German youth is ready to follow new ideals. They are angry with France which is a dead weight on the past. We can't judge Europe by the victor.

G. The Indian youth may not be capable of heroic self-sacrifice, but it is coming under the influence of non-resistance.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

262. SPEECH AT INTERNATIONAL SANATORIUM

VILLENEUVE, GENEVA,
December 9, 1931

It is a matter of joy to me that I am able to make this hurried visit. That you are in a beautiful building situated in pleasant surroundings must be a matter of recreation for you. As you have very properly remarked, this sanatorium should not be for merely healing the body but for promotion of international friendship. After all one finds that healing of the body plays a subordinate part in human experience. One may live down injury to the body but not the injury to the soul. And so it is a matter of keen joy to me that you are looking after things of the spirit also. I wish you many years of service, complete restoration to health and life of the inmates and useful international service thereafter.

Q. Does psychological influence promote healing?

A. I am afraid illness will remain with mankind so long as mankind exists. But I do believe that at present we are making a fetish of illness. If I had my way, I would reduce medical treatment to a minimum. I have enforced that rule not only in my life, but in the lives of hundreds of my companions. I believe that most of the illnesses we suffer from yield to hygienic treatment and I think that in life, which is beset with dangers, we should count with grave dangers also. And this has given us much consolation in illness. The rule is: let us not think of having services which millions in all parts of the earth cannot command. For instance, the favoured students and professors of medicine can have access to this, but not the millions who are suffering like you. I do not want to say this by way of criticism of the sanatorium, but I do want to say that I am not personally in love with sanatoria like these. Therefore I know full well that if millionaires of the earth emptied their wealth it would not be enough to build millions of sanatoria for people needing them. In reducing hygienic laws we should reduce them to such proportions that the poorest may observe them in their own lives and their own health.

That brings us to psychological influence which promotes healing. I believe in this to a great extent. I believe a healthy mind presupposes a healthy body and, if you are to analyse—

medical students as you are—illnesses that the flesh is heir to, you will find that most are avoidable—and mind has a great part to play in creating illness and promoting it. Whereas, instead of pampering ourselves, if we were tolerant, we might be able to shed these illnesses. This is a subject which, as some of you know, I have been studying or experimenting in as a quack for 35 years. I could therefore keep you engaged for hours in reciting my experiences.

Q. What is the moral significance of manual work?

A. I think so much of it that in institutions I have founded manual work is a sacred obligation for the inmates and he who does not do manual work steals food. He is not entitled to eat his portion of food, unless he has done sufficient manual work and I have not the slightest shadow of a doubt that when a man shirks manual work, he stunts his moral growth. I have no doubt that, if we recognize the significance of manual work, many of the monstrosities would die a natural death. The law of bread labour was that that man was entitled to bread who worked for it. You find that law enunciated by Jesus when he said: thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow; and if this was literally followed, there would be very little illness on earth and little of hideous surroundings on earth.

Q. Is it not possible to live in Europe without compromise in accordance with your ideas?

A. Not impossible but difficult. But, however difficult the thing may be, it is necessary to make a heroic effort in order to translate the ideal into practice.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

263. *SPEECH AT MEETING*[1]

GENEVA,
December 10, 1931

I have heard a great deal of the magnificent scenery of your country, but seeing surpasses my expectations and the affection I have received has added to the joy of seeing the scenery of your country. I wish I had more time at my disposal to make the acquaintance of individuals and to see the beautiful spots of this

[1] The meeting, which was held during the lunch hour in the Victoria Hall under the auspices of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, was attended by about 2,000 people.

country of yours. But I must not detain you by inviting you to share my joy. I know that all of you who have come to this meeting have been deprived of your luncheon hour and I must not waste that precious time of yours by talking to you of my joy. I want to talk to you about that to which my life is dedicated and that particularly is being tried on a scale not tried on this earth before. I refer to the means adopted in India for attaining independence. History shows that when a people have been subjugated and desire to get rid of the subjection, they have rebelled and resorted to use of arms. In India, on the other hand, we have resorted to means that are scrupulously non-violent and peaceful and strangers have testified and I am here to give my testimony that in a great measure we seem to have succeeded in attaining our goal. I know that it is still an experiment in making. I cannot claim absolute success as yet, but I venture to suggest to you that experience has gone so far that it is worth while to study the experience. I further suggest that, if that experience becomes a full success, India will have made a contribution to world peace for which the world is thirsting. You have in this great country of yours the Central Office of the League of Nations. That League is expected to perform wonders. It is expected to replace war and by its own power arbitrate between nations who might have differences between themselves. But it has always seemed to me that the League lacks the necessary sanction. It depends, as it has to, largely if not exclusively, on the judgment of the nations concerned. I venture to suggest to you that the means we have advocated in India supply the necessary sanction not only to a body like the League, but to any world organization for this great cause of the world. But I must not detain you in taking you through different phases of this movement. I must satisfy myself by just introducing to you this movement and by telling you of the progress the movement makes if it is successful. I have a series of questions and in order that I might give as much time as I can give you, I have given you only a brief introduction. I have already taken up 10 minutes. I am taking up only a few questions M. Privat has chosen.

The question about what I had and had not said in London.

This is what has been put in my mouth: "I have no sympathy for terrorism and violence. But if necessary, India will resort to violence, call that what you like."

I referred the para to the Editor for correction and the correction confirms in its entirety the report he had sent. But I see that he has not reproduced passages from speeches from which

he says he has quoted. My speeches at the Round Table Conference have been all officially reported and I can only tell you that throughout those speeches there can't be found a single word in corroboration of this statement. Then it is stated that I made a similar statement in some other speeches also. Meanwhile I must ask you to believe me when I say that I never made the statement that masses would, if necessary, resort to violence. I regard myself in my lucid moments as incapable of making a statement of that character. Non-violence is not a policy but a creed. I would pray to God that He may give me faith to lay down my life rather than countenance violence in any shape or form and, as this matter has attained some local importance, I respectfully call upon the correspondent to give his name and reproduce the report. And though tomorrow I shall be outside your jurisdiction, I shall take care to give the fullest satisfaction though I may be outside India. And I want to do so as I want to attain your goodwill. My movement and I have to stand or fall by the declaration I have made, viz., that I must stand by non-violence wholly unadulterated. At the same time I tender you my apology for having taken up a few minutes on a personal explanation.

Q. Why did you make such a solemn protest because newspapers had reported you advising soldiers to shoot in the air?

A. Whether I made a solemn protest I do not know, but I made my position clear. I do not want a single soldier, after having taken an oath to serve the army, to mislead the people by shooting in the air. I regard myself as a soldier, as a soldier of peace. I know the value of discipline and truth and I would consider it unmanly for a soldier who has taken an oath to deny himself the consequences when he defies the order by shooting in the air. In my opinion, when a soldier comes to the conclusion that it is inhuman and beneath the dignity of man, he should lay down arms and pay the penalty of insubordination.

Q. How could workers obtain justice without violence? If capitalists use force why should not workers use pressure?

A. This is the old law, the law of the jungle—blow against blow—and I have told you that I am endeavouring to make this experiment essentially to substitute the law of the jungle, which is foreign to man. You may not know that I am supposed to be the chief adviser to a labour union in Ahmedabad, which has commanded the testimony of labour experts. Through this labour union we have been endeavouring to enforce methods of non-violence for solving questions arising between the employers and the

employed. Therefore, what I am now about to tell you is based upon actual experience—in the very line about which the question has been asked. In my humble opinion, labour can always vindicate itself provided it is united and self-sacrificing. No matter how oppressive capitalism may be, I am convinced that those who are connected with labour and guiding labour have no idea of the resources that labour can command and capitalism can never command. If labour would only understand and recognize that capital is perfectly helpless without labour, labour would easily come to its own. We have unfortunately come under the hypnotic suggestion and influence of capital that capital is all in all on earth. But a moment's thought would show that labour has at its disposal a capital that capitalists never possess. Ruskin taught in his age that labour had unrivalled opportunity. But he spoke above our heads. At the present moment an Englishman is making the same experiment. He is an economist and also a capitalist, but through economic researches he has come to the same conclusions that Ruskin arrived at intuitively and he has brought back a vital message. He says it is wrong to think that a piece of metal constitutes capital; it is also wrong to think that so much produce is capital. He adds that, if we go to the source, it is labour that is capital and that living capital cannot be reduced in terms of economics and it is inexhaustible. It is upon that law and truth we are conducting the labour union in Ahmedabad and fighting the Government and it is that law the recognition of which delivered 1,700,000 people in Champaran from age-long tyranny. I must not tarry to tell you what that tyranny was,[1] but those who are interested in that problem will be able to study every one of the facts which I have put before them. Now I tell you what we have done. There is in the English language a very potent word —all languages have it: 'No'. And the secret is that when capital wants labour to say 'Yes', labour roars out 'No'. And immediately labour comes to recognize that it has choice before it of saying 'No' when it wants to say 'No', it has nothing to fear and it would not matter in the slightest degree that capital has guns and poison gas at its disposal. Capital will still be perfectly helpless if labour will assert its dignity making good its 'No'. Then labour does not need to retaliate, but stands defiant receiving the bullets and poison gas and still insists upon its 'No'. But I tell you why labour so often fails. Instead of sterilizing capital as

[1] For details of the Champaran struggle for the abolition of forced labour on the indigo plantations, *vide* Vols. XIII and XIV.

I have suggested labour should do (I say this as a labourer myself), it wants to seize capital and become capitalist itself in the worst sense of the term. And therefore the capitalist who is properly entrenched and organized, finding in labour a desire for the same objective, makes use of labour to suppress labour. And if we were really not under the hypnotic spell, every one of us—man and woman—would recognize this rock-bottom truth without the slightest difficulty. Having achieved brilliant successes in various departments of life, I am saying this with authority. I have placed before you something not superhuman but within the grasp of every labourer. You will see that what labour is called upon to do is nothing more than what Swiss soldiers are doing, for undoubtedly the Swiss soldier carries his own destruction in his pocket. I want labour to copy the courage of the soldier without copying the brute in the soldier, viz., the ability to inflict death, and I suggest to you that a labourer who courts death without carrying arms shows a courage of a much higher degree than the man who is armed from top to toe. Though this is a fascinating subject, I must reluctantly leave this point and go to the fourth question.

Q. Since disarmament chiefly depends on the Great Powers, why force it on Switzerland which is small and neutral and non-aggressive?

A. In the first place, from this neutral ground of yours I am speaking to all powers and not only to Switzerland. If you want to carry this message to other parts of Europe, I shall be absolved from all blame and seeing that Switzerland is neutral territory and non-aggressive, Switzerland does not need this army. Secondly, it is through your hospitality and by reason of your occupying this vantage ground. Is it not better for you to give the world a lesson in disarmament and show that you are brave enough to do without an army?

Q. Why do you ignore the sacred traditions of military development? Don't you know that the mere presence of the Swiss army saved us from the horror of being overrun by foreign armies?

A. Will the questioner forgive me if I say that a double ignorance underlies this question? He deplores the fact that, if you give up the profession of soldiering, you will miss the education you receive in service and sacrifice. None need run away with the idea that because you avoid military conscription you are not in for a conscription of a severer and nobler type. When I spoke to you about labour, I told you that labour ought to assimilate all the noble qualities of soldiering: endurance and defiance of death and sacrifice. When you disarm yourself, it does not mean

that you will have a merry time. It is not that you are absolved from the duty of serving your homes when you give up soldiering; on the contrary, your women and children would be taking part in defending your homes. Again I am not talking to you without experience. In the little institution[1] that we are conducting, we are teaching our women and children also how to save that institution—as we are living among thieves and robbers. Everything becomes simple and easy the moment you learn to give up your own life in order to save the life of others. And lastly it is really forgotten that safety which an individual derives from innocence is safety which no amount of arms will give you. The second part of the ignorance lies in the second part of the question. I must respectfully deny the truth of the statement that the presence of the Swiss army prevented the War from affecting Switzerland. Although Belgium had its own army, it was not saved and, if the rival armies had wanted a passage through Switzerland, believe me, they would have fought you also. You might have fought in turn, but you would have fought much better non-violently.

Q. How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last War we should have been ruined?[2]

A. At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool, I must answer this in the manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country if you allowed an army to devastate your country. But a moment ago I told you that there was one thing in common between the soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence and, if I had been a citizen of Switzerland or President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to this army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland you would have presented a living wall of men, women and children and invited them to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. Then I can tell you that it was not beyond human experience last year. We showed that it was quite possible. Women stood lathi charges without showing the slightest cowardice. In Peshawar thousands stood a hail of bullets without resorting to any violence whatsoever. Imagine such men and women standing in front of an army wanting safe passage. It would be brutal

[1] The reference is to the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati.

[2] The question is taken from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe" published in *Young India*, 31-12-1931.

enough, you would say, to walk over them, but you would still have done your duty and allowed yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over corpses would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you would, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

Q. The International Red Cross is a special gift to the world. What do you think of it? It has saved thousands of lives.

A. I am ashamed to have to own that I do not know the history of this wonderful and magnificent organization. If it has saved persons by the million, my head bows before it. But having paid this tribute, may I say that this organization should cease to think of giving relief after war but of giving relief without war. If war had no redeeming features, no courage behind it, it would be a despicable thing and would not need a speech to destroy it. But what is here being prescribed to you is infinitely nobler than war in all its branches including the Red Cross organization. Believe me there are millions wounded by their own folly. There are millions of wretched homes on the face of the earth. Therefore the non-violent societies of tomorrow would have enough work chartered out for them when they take up international service and may Switzerland give the lead to the world.

Q. Can you give any message to individual organizations?

A. I venture to say that if, in answering all the questions asked, I have not given a message, I must confess I am not able to give any other message.

Q. What is the difference between your message and the Christian which we prefer to keep?

A. I do not profess to give any original message at all. My message is as old as this earth and I do not know that it is at all different from the Christian message. If you mean by it non-violence, I should be sorry to discover that you have given up the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than that the Christians of Europe were translating in their lives the message of Jesus. The second question betrays ignorance. Shall I answer it in Biblical language—you cannot save yourself unless you are prepared to lose yourself.[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *St. Mark* VIII. 35 and *St. Luke* IX. 24

264. DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND

[On or after *December 10, 1931*][1]

Q. Cruelty or wickedness in man is not caused by will, but by morbid taste. What would non-resistance do to preserve society from these half-responsible people?

A. I do not need to use violence at all. But I would need to keep them under restraint. I would use some social force. I would not call it violence. My brother becomes a lunatic and I put iron on his hands.

There is no use of violence when the motive is lacking. Nor would he feel the violence. On the contrary, when he comes to his senses, he would thank me for it. In his lunacy he would feel the violence, offer resistance to it. I would not mind the resistance because my action would be dictated by unadulterated love; there is not even the selfishness of loving behind it. If I am tying his hands, it is not in order to save myself from being hurt. If I felt that I should hurt myself by trying to save him, I should subject myself to being hurt. In the same way I should treat these half-crazy men, treat them as sick men, put them in an infirmary and put them [not] under heartless jailors but under medical men who have studied their conditions and surround them by kind nurses. That is only dealing with the system.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

265. INTERVIEW TO SUKHOTINA TOLSTOY[2]

ROME,
[*December 13, 1931*][3]

SUKHOTINA TOLSTOY: I have been long looking forward to an opportunity of meeting you. If my father had been alive, he would have been delighted to hear of your non-violent battle for freedom.

[1] The source mentions no date, but this was recorded after the meeting in Geneva on December 10.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe"

[3] According to an entry under this date in "Diary, 1931"

GANDHIJI: I am sure. And are you the daughter who wrote that famous letter[1] of your father to me?

That was another daughter, a fact which led to inquiry about Tolstoy's children.

S. T. Six of us are still living. The two daughters accept my father's principles, but the four sons do not. You know my father allowed every one of us the fullest liberty of thought and action and, whilst these brothers of mine revered my father, they were not prepared to accept his principles.

I was a friend of Romain Rolland.

G. Why was? Are you not a friend now?

S. T. No, I used to be a great friend of his until two years ago. He wrote to me fairly frequently and I also used to write to him.

G. But now?

S. T. But now I find that he is in sympathy with Bolshevism and Bolshevik methods. I do not quarrel with their goal, but their doctrine that the end justifies the means seems to me to be frightful. How can Romain Rolland, a believer in non-violence, have any sympathy with them?

G. Supposing what you say is true, is it not all the more necessary that you should write to him and tell him what you feel about his views? Don't you as a friend of two years ago owe it to him to write freely and fully? After all, he is the one true and honest man in Europe after Tolstoy. Like your father he is old, worn-out, and unhappy over the tendencies of the present age and he has your father's childlike simplicity of never taking a correction amiss, no matter whether it came from a wise man or a fool.

S. T. I know that he is all that. In the War he was the only man who stood out bravely against it and he has the same bravery even now. I also know that he has written the best book on my father that has ever been written. But somehow I have hesitated, I actually wrote a letter, but never posted it. If you like, I shall post it now.

G. Do. I want you to do so.

S. T. Then I will say that you asked me to do so.

G. Yes, you may. I shall also write to him.[2]

Young India, 14-1-1932

[1] *Vide* Vol. IX, p. 593.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Romain Rolland", 20-12-1931.

266. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, ROME[1]

[December 13, 1931][2]

The beauty of non-violent war is that women can play the same part in it as men. In a violent war the women have no such part in it as men. In a violent war the women have no such privilege, and the Indian women played a more effective part in our last non-violent war than men. The reason is simple. Non-violent war calls into play suffering to the largest extent, and who can suffer more purely and nobly than women? The women in India tore down the *purdah* and came forward to work for the nation. They saw that the country demanded something more than their looking after their homes. They manufactured contraband salt, they picketed foreign-cloth shops and liquor shops, and tried to wean both the seller and the customer from both. At late hours in the night, they pursued the drunkards to their dens with courage and charity in their hearts. They marched to jails and they sustained lathi blows as few men did. If the women of the West will try to vie with men in becoming brutes, they have no lesson to learn from the women of India. They will have to cease to take delight in sending their husbands and sons to kill people and congratulate them on their valour.

Young India, 14-1-1932

267. LETTER TO BRISCOE

December 14, 1931

DEAR MR. BRISCOE,

I have read your letter to Devdas. I was sorry not to have been able to visit Ireland and to see Mr. De Valera. I had looked forward to that visit but a peremptory call from India made it impossible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe"
[2] From a reference in "Diary, 1931"

[PS.]

Do please thank Mrs. Wood for all the trouble she had taken.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: C.W. 4520. Courtesy: R. Briscoe

268. AN AUTOGRAPH

[On or before *December 15, 1931*][1]

Be true.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2333

269. LETTER TO DEVI WEST

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 15, 1931

MY DEAR DEVI[2],

I often wanted to write to you but never could get the time. We are today on the Red Sea. I am slowly overtaking the arrears of sleep and correspondence in between. I was delighted to hear from Muriel that you had decided to join her. You will be a great acquisition to Kingsley Hall and I know you will be happy there. You must write to me regularly.

We are a party of nine all travelling deck. The weather is still cold but pleasant. I had your farewell letter.

Love.

BHAI

From a photostat: C.W. 4437. Courtesy: A. H. West

[1] On the same sheet, below Gandhiji's autograph, there is also one of Madan Mohan Malaviya bearing this date.

[2] Ada West, sister of A. H. West

270. CABLE TO CROFT[1]

PORT SAID,
December 17, 1931

CROFT
INDIA OFFICE
LONDON

THANKS WIRE. "GIORNALE D'ITALIA" STATEMENT WHOLLY FALSE. NEVER GAVE ANY INTERVIEW PRESSMEN ROME. LAST INTERVIEW[2] I GAVE WAS TO REUTER VILLENEUVE WHERE I ASKED PEOPLE INDIA NOT COME HASTY DECISION BUT AWAIT MY STATEMENT. I SHALL TAKE NO PRECIPITATE ACTION AND SHALL MAKE AMPLE PREVIOUS ENTREATY AUTHORITIES SHOULD

[1] Sir Samuel Hoare, later Viscount Templewood, in his *Nine Troubled Years* (Collins, 1954), says that when he heard the report of "a fictitious interview" Gandhiji was said to have given to Gayda of *Giornale d'Italia*, he was so "horrified and amazed" that he at once telegraphed for its confirmation. "The answer came", says Templewood, "from Gandhi himself, to the effect that he had made no such statement, and that the reported interview was a fake." Presumably the answer in question was this cable.

The cable which had been sent to Gandhiji "from an authoritative quarter" according to a *Times* report was as follows:

"Press reports state that, on embarkation, you issued to *Giornale d'Italia* a statement which contained expressions such as following:

'(1) Round Table Conference marked definite rupture of relations between Indian nation and British Government.

(2) You are returning to India in order to restart at once struggle against England.

(3) Boycott would now prove powerful means of rendering more acute British crisis.

(4) We will not pay taxes, we will not work for England in any way, we will completely isolate British authorities, their politics and their institutions, and we will totally boycott all British goods.'

Some of your friends here think you must have been misreported and, if so, denial desirable."

Notwithstanding Gandhiji's disclaimer, Gayda persisted in his claim that the interview was genuine. Gandhiji repeated this disclaimer in 1934 when he was again asked about the interview.

[2] *Vide* p. 399.

DIRECT ACTION BECOME UNFORTUNATELY NECESSARY. PLEASE GIVE THIS WIDEST PUBLICITY POSSIBLE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9389. Courtesy: India Office Library

271. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

PORT SAID,
December 17, 1931

DEAR AGATHA,

Just one line to say I have been thinking of you constantly. May your work prosper.

With love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1449

272. INTERVIEW TO REUTER

PORT SAID,
December 17, 1931

Mahatma Gandhi arrived here at noon, and met several deputations, including one of the Wafdists. He posed for photographers, and gave autographs. Interviewed by Reuter, he repudiated the interview to the *Giornale d'Italia* in which he was alleged to have said that he was going back to India to renew the struggle and said that he did not give any journalist at Rome an interview. He added:

I have reached no decision, and naturally, cannot until I arrive in Bombay and consult the members of the Working Committee.

The Hindustan Times, 19-12-1931

273. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

WHILE NEARING ADEN,
December 19, 1931

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have been getting from you occasionally, not letters exactly, but little notes. As I myself did not write often, I cannot blame you. However, there were strong reasons for my not being able to write. In London, I could neither sleep nor have regular meals. I used to carry my tiffin with me and ate wherever I

could. This time I seldom wrote to anybody and, as for writing for *Young India* and *Navajivan*, I had to stop it altogether. You had no excuse for not writing to me or writing only brief notes. But the saying that habits die hard is true in your case. There is, however, another saying which applies to people who are prepared to try hard: "A mere string can make a dent in a black, strong, stone." What, then, cannot one achieve with effort?

We entered the Red Sea today. There are nine of us. All of us are deck passengers. Deck passengers get no amenities worth the name. But we have everything we require and so need not worry. I mention this merely to describe the conditions on the deck.

We shall reach Bombay on the 28th. Let us see what happens when we arrive there. If the struggle starts again, you need not think you have to come away immediately.[1] First watch what form the struggle takes and then come. Do not come until you have been able to make proper arrangements for the work there. Moreover, all of you keep good health there, and I would not be happy if it suffered by your going to India. You should do what you think is your duty, without regard to what I may wish. I say this now because I cannot say whether I would get any time to write to you afterwards. They may even arrest me as soon as I reach Bombay.

It certainly was not expected that Shanti would be at peace after hegot the money. I am therefore not at all surprised to learn that he has gone away. I wonder how you manage things now. Do render all possible service to Sastriji who has gone there. Andrews and Sarojinidevi are already there and you should attend on them too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4787

[1] From South Africa

274. LETTER TO MARCHIONESS VITELLESCHI

S.S. "PILSNA",
December [19,][1] *1931*

DEAR SISTER,

I had your long letter. If you will think less of yourself and lose yourself in the duty immediately in front of you, you will find your peace.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2768

275. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

S.S. "PILSNA",
December 20, 1931

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I beg you to write to the daughter of Tolstoy and satisfy her curiosity concerning Bolshevism.[2] The General and Mrs. Moris were extremely kind to us all. We felt as if we were one of the family as soon as we entered the house. Mussolini is a riddle to me. Many of his reforms attract me. He seems to have done much for the peasant class. I admit an iron hand is there. But as violence is the basis of Western society, Mussolini's reforms deserve an impartial study. His care of the poor, his opposition to super-urbanization, his efforts to bring about co-ordination between capital and labour, seem to me to demand special attention. I would like you to enlighten me on these matters. My own fundamental objection is that these reforms are compulsory. But it is the same in all democratic institutions. What strikes me is that behind Mussolini's implacability is a desire to serve is people. Even behind his emphatic speeches there is a nucleus of sincerity and of passionate love for his people. It also seems to me that

[1] In the source the figure looks like 11, on which date Gandhiji was in Villeneuve. The letter has an Aden postmark bearing the date December 23, which indicates that '11' is presumably a slip for '19'.

[2] *Vide* "Interview to Sukhotina Tolstoy", pp. 422-3.

the majority of Italian people love the iron government of Mussolini. I do not wish that you should take the trouble of replying to me immediately. Take your time, I beg of you. It is not necessary to say that I do not propose to write publicly on this subject at this moment. I have simply put these questions before you as before someone who knows infinitely more than I do about the subject, and now I think, if you come during the cold season between January and March, you can easily bear the climate and probably derive some good out of it. You can certainly come by air, but I would rather you came by sea. If you take up this proposition seriously, an eventual programme can be submitted to you.

With deep love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 9441. Courtesy: R. K. Prabhu

276. LETTER TO CARL HEATH

S.S. "PILSNA",
December 20, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of friendly farewell. I treasure the thought that among the many friends of India's cause I can count those whose names you have kindly sent me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1026

277. THE INDIAN ARMY

[December 21, 1931][1]

However honest the Prime Minister's declaration on the closing day of the Round Table Conference was, it fell far short of the national demand, and hence was utterly unacceptable if there was no room for expansion. And yet the pity of it is that it represents the English mind.

The true test of responsibility is control of Defence and Finance. The declaration is unequivocal about both these matters.

[1] According to an entry in "Diary, 1931" Gandhiji wrote an article for *The Indian N[illegible]* (which, from 1932, changed to *The India Review*) on this date. [illegible] was the article.

There is to be no Indian control, certainly not of Defence, and virtually not of Finance.

The reason for this extraordinary state of affairs is the great ignorance that prevails in England about India. Many of the best Englishmen believe that we are incapable of defending ourselves or managing our Finance. If this is so, we are certainly far away from the Complete Independence we want.

But I claim that we are quite able to look after our own Defence and Finance. What is the army in India? Roughly, it consists of sixty thousand British soldiers and a hundred and sixty thousand Indian soldiers—all hirelings. Indian soldiers are chosen for their being devoid of any national instinct whatever. They are almost trained to regard themselves as foreigners who should look down upon the ordinary citizen with whom they have nothing in common. The whole of this army is used for external aggression, and the protection of British interests and British lives within Indian borders.

This army I regard as a menace, within, to nationalism, and without, to the independence of India's neighbours. Surely India managed somehow to live and to preserve her culture before the British advent. India's defence lies in the cultivation of friendly relations with her neighbours and her ability to resist, through non-violent non-co-operation, her exploitation by any nation.

The first act of a National Government should be to disband this menace, unless it were reduced to manageable proportions and the control handed honourably and peacefully to the National Government by the British Government. This is the least expiation the British Government owe to the people of India for having brought into being an army designed to crush their legitimate aspirations.

Should the British Government not see the obvious duty of doing this elementary thing, the Nationalist Party must continue to fight till hard experience has demonstrated the necessity. The Indian Army of the future will not be mercenary but voluntary, and largely in the nature of police.

But the British people have been taught to think that the army in India is the crowning act of British rule for which India should be for ever thankful. The Editor of *The India Review* has to dispel this colossal ignorance by hard study of facts and figures showing how the army is composed and how, from its conception, it has been used for the spoliation of India and her neighbours.

The India Review, 16-1-1932

278. A RETROSPECT

[*December 23, 1931*][1]

Never since taking up the editorship of *Young India* have I, though not being on a sickbed or in a prison, been unable to send something for *Young India* or *Navajivan*, as I was during my stay in London.

The uninterrupted series of engagements keeping me awake till over midnight made it physically impossible for me to write anything for these journals. Fortunately, Mahadev Desai was with me and though he too was overworked, he was able to send a full weekly budget for *Young India.*

Nevertheless the reader will expect me to give my own impressions of the London visit.

Though I approached the visit in fear and trembling, I am not sorry for having gone there. It brought me in touch with the responsible Englishmen and women as also with the man in the street. This experience will be of inestimable value in future, whether we have to put up a fight again or not. It is no small matter to know with whom you are fighting or dealing.

It was a good thing that Muriel Lester, the soul of Kingsley Hall settlement, invited me to stay at her settlement and that I was able to accept the invitation. The choice lay between Kinglsey Hall and Mr. Birla's Arya Bhavan. I had no difficulty in making my choice nor had Mr. Birla. But great pressure was put upon me by Indian friends, and that naturally, to stay at Arya Bhavan. Experience showed that Kingsley Hall was an ideal choice. It is situated among the poor of London and is dedicated purely to their service. Several women and some men, under the inspiration of Muriel Lester, have dedicated themselves to such service. Not a corner of the big building is used for any other purpose. There is religious service, there are entertainments, there are lectures, billiards, reading-room, etc., for the use of the poor. The inmates live a life of severe simplicity. There is no superfluous furniture to be found in all that settlement. The inmates occupy tiny rooms called cells. It was no joke to accommodate five of us in that settlement. But love makes room where there is none. Four

[1] The date is inferred from the entry under this date "Diary, 1931".

settlers vacated their cells which were placed at our disposal. Bedding, etc., had to be borrowed. Fortunately, we had all armed ourselves with sufficient blankets and, being used to squat on the floor, most of the articles borrowed could be returned. But, there was no doubt, my presence at the settlement put a severe tax on its time, space and other resources. But the good people would not hear of my leaving it. And to me it was a privilege to receive the loving, silent and unseen services of the members and a perennial joy to come in vital contact with the poor of the East End of London. Needless to say I was able to live exactly as in India, and early morning walks through the streets of East London are a memory that can never be effaced. During these walks I had most intimate talks with those members who joined me and others whom Muriel allowed. For she was a vigilant guardian of my time whilst I was in the settlement. And she would get easily angry if she heard that my time was being abused by people when she was not by me.

During my stay in East London, I saw the best side of human nature and was able to confirm my intuitive opinion that at bottom there was neither East nor West. And as I received the smiling greetings of the East Enders, I knew that they had no malice in them and they wanted India to regain her independence. This experience has brought me closer to England if such a thing was possible. For me the fight is never with individuals, it is ever with their manners and their measures. But this intimate contact with the simple poor people of the East End, including the little children, will put me still more on my guard against any hasty action.

I may not omit my all too brief experience of Lancashire and its operatives and employers whom, to my agreeable surprise, I found to be so free from prejudice and receptive of new facts and arguments drawn from them. Here, of course, the ground was prepared for me by Charlie Andrews. I must mention too the never-to-be-forgotten visit to Mr. C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, the most impartial and the most honest paper in Great Britain. A great British statesman told me the *Guardian* was the sanest and the most honest journal in the world. Nor can I easily forget the communions at Canterbury, Chichester, Oxford, Cambridge and Eton. They gave me an insight into the working of the British mind which I could have got through no other means. These contacts have brought about friendships which will endure for ever. I do not omit the two detectives and their companions and the many constables who were told off to look after me. To me Sergeants Evans and Rogers, the two detectives, were no mere police

officers. They became my trusty guides and friends looking after my comforts with the punctilious care of loving nurses. And it was a matter of great joy to me that they were permitted at my request to accompany me as far as Brindisi.

Last, but not least, was my pilgrimage to Romain Rolland, the sage of Villeneuve. Could I have left India just to visit him and his inseparable sister Madeleine, his interpreter and friend, I would have undertaken the voyage. But that could not be. The excuse of the Round Table Conference made this pilgrimage easily possible, and chance threw Rome in my way. And I was able to see something of that great and ancient city and Mussolini, the unquestioned dictator of Italy. And what would not I have given to be able to bow my head before the living image at the Vatican of Christ Crucified! It was not without a wrench that I could tear myself away from that scene of living tragedy. I saw there at once that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others, but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself.

II

I am, therefore, returning home not filled with disappointment but with hope enriched. This hope is based on the fact that what I saw in England and on the Continent not only did not shake my faith in truth and non-violence, but, on the contrary, strongly confirmed it. I found, too, many more kindred spirits than I had expected.

Of the Round Table Conference there is nothing new I can report. I spoke out plainly what I thought about its composition and its achievements. One thing, however, I would like to say here. It would be wrong to think that the British Ministers are humbugs and that they do not mean what they say. I have come away with the impression that they are honest in their professions but they are labouring under a heavy handicap. The delegates, whilst seemingly unanimous over fundamentals, betrayed amazing differences on details of fundamental importance. The minorities' question became a hopeless tangle, not wholly through the fault of the Ministers. But, after all, this was a temporary handicap. Their greatest handicap lay in their being spoon-fed on one-sided and often hopelessly false statements and anti-nationalist opinions received by them from their agents in India ever since the commencement of the British Raj. For the Ministers this information is generally gospel truth. They, therefore, believe us to be incapable

of handling our own Defence and Finance, they believe that the presence of British troops and British civilians is necessary for the well-being of India. Perhaps, there is no nation on earth equal to the British in the capacity for self-deception.

In confirmation of what I am writing, I would commend to the reader the speech delivered by Sir Samuel Hoare at the House of Commons at the debate on the White Paper. In spite of warnings to the contrary, each time I saw the Secretary of State for India I came away with a higher opinion of his honesty and frankness. Of all the British Ministers I found him to be the most straightforward and frank. He is also a strong man, but he is a hard man. I believe him to be capable of advising or approving of ruthless repression and of hitting the hardest. And he would honestly think that he was merciful even as a surgeon is merciful who applies the knife when he must with a steady and strong hand. This Secretary of State is a hard-working conscientious man who would slave away even though he might have a temperature. He knows his mind at a given moment. He has behind him all the British parties and the large majority known in modern British history. His speech, therefore, is the best British type. And yet it falls hopelessly short of the Congress demand and is based, as Congressmen would say, on utterly wrong data which unfortunately he believes in common with many honest British statesmen.

How can this British mentality be changed or, in other words, how can power be wrested from such unwilling hands? No argument will carry conviction to these statesmen; they are all seasoned hard-headed soldiers. They like and appreciate facts, deeds. They will understand an open rebellion and, if they cannot suppress it, they will at once admit that we are capable of defending ourselves and administering our own affairs. And I have come away with my view confirmed that they will also understand and perhaps more quickly appreciate a non-violent rebellion. But the unfortunate fact is that they do not believe in our corporate non-violence. And, what is more, they believe that corporate non-violence on a mass scale is impossible. No argument can remove this disbelief. Only actual experience can induce faith.

Nor do they believe that the Congress is really the party that can deliver the goods. Even General Smuts could not convince them that the Congress was such a party. How could he in the teeth of reports to the contrary from their agents in India?

Thus it appears to me that a further fiery ordeal is a necessity of the case. The British mind is not ready for anything radically more than the Prime Minister's declaration.

III

But I can come to no hasty conclusion. This is being written on 23rd December on s.s. *Pilsna* in ignorance of the situation in India. I do not know what possibilities there still are for further negotiation. Nor do I know how far the situation in Bengal, United Provinces, Gujarat, and the South permits of peaceful negotiations. This much is clearer to me than ever before that our true battle-ground is not London, it is India. We have to convert not the British Ministers but the British civilians in India. The strongest Secretary of State for India cannot move much beyond the advice of his local agents. India Office is a clog on the wheel of India's progress. The real power resides in the 250 District Collectors, not even in the Viceroy. These Collectors have powers nowhere enjoyed on earth even by real dictators. The latter do not have behind them the machinery of a mighty Government which the Collectors can move at will.

But thus stated the problem becomes incredibly simple. Each district has the key to the situation in its own hands. We have to work out our own salvation in India by negotiation if at all possible, by direct action if it becomes imperatively necessary. I know that I shall not light-heartedly invite the nation to the ordeal, nor shall I hesitate, if I find no way out, to advise action. I shall strain every nerve to discover a way out.

Young India, 31-12-1931

279. *TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*[1]

[On or after *December 23, 1931*]

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI
BARDOLI

YES NOON.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18408

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of December 23, which read: "Your arrival being Monday suggestt aking silence earlier Sunday" (S.N. 18407).

280. *TELEGRAM TO REVASHANKAR JHAVERI*[1]

[On or after *December 23, 1931*]

MORALITY[2]
BOMBAY

NINE INCLUDING SWISS COUPLE[3].

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18409

281. *STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF AMERICA*[4]

[*December 24, 1931*][5]

I have never been able to reconcile myself to the gaieties of the Christmas season. They have appeared to me to be so inconsistent with the life and teaching of Jesus.

How I wish America could lead the way by devoting the season to a real moral stock-taking and emphasizing consecration to the service of mankind for which Jesus lived and died on the Cross.

From a photostat: S.N. 18411

282. *TALK ON BOARD* s.s. *"PILSNA"*[6]

December 25, 1931

I shall tell you how, to an outsider like me, the story of Christ, as told in the New Testament, has struck. My acquaintance with the Bible began nearly forty-five years ago, and that was through the New Testament. I could not then take much

[1] This message is noted along with the message to Vallabhbhai Patel; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] Telegraphic address of Revashankar Jhaveri at Mani Bhawan

[3] Edmond Privat and his wife

[4] This was given to James Mills.

[5] From the entry under this date in "Diary, 1931"

[6] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Jesus I Love". The talk was given at 4.30 a.m. Half a dozen persons attended.

interest in the Old Testament, which I had certainly read, if only to fulfil a promise I had made to a friend whom I happened to meet in a hotel. But when I came to the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount, I began to understand the Christian teaching, and the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount echoed something I had learnt in childhood and something which seemed to be part of my being and which I felt was being acted up to in the daily life around me.

I say it seemed to be acted up to, meaning thereby that it was not necessary for my purpose that they were actually living the life. This teaching was non-retaliation, or non-resistance to evil. Of all the things I read what remained with me for ever was that Jesus came almost to give a new law—though He of course had said He had not come to give a new law, but tack something on to the old Mosaic law. Well, He changed it so that it became a new law—not an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but to be ready to receive two blows when one was given, and to go two miles when you were asked to go one.

I said to myself, "This is what one learns in one's childhood. Surely this is not Christianity." For, all I had then been given to understand was that to be a Christian was to have a brandy bottle in one hand and beef in the other. The Sermon on the Mount, however, falsified the impression.

As my contact with real Christians, i.e., men living in fear of God, increased, I saw that the Sermon on the Mount was the whole of Christianity for him who wanted to live a Christian life. It is that Sermon which has endeared Jesus to me.

I may say that I have never been interested in a historical Jesus. I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer's imagination. For the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for me.

Reading, therefore, the whole story in that light, it seems to me that Christianity has yet to be lived, unless one says that where there is boundless love and no idea of retaliation whatsoever, it is Christianity that lives. But then it surmounts all boundaries and book-teaching. Then it is something indefinable, not capable of being preached to men, not capable of being transmitted from mouth to mouth, but from heart to heart. But Christianity is not commonly understood in that way.

Somehow, in God's providence, the Bible has been preserved from destruction by the Christians, so-called. The British and Foreign Bible Society has had it translated into many languages.

All that may serve a real purpose in the time to come. Two thousand years in the life of a living faith may be nothing. For though we sang, "All glory to God on high and on the earth be peace," there seems to be today neither glory to God nor peace on earth.

As long as it remains a hunger still unsatisfied, as long as Christ is not yet born, we have to look forward to Him. When real peace is established, we will not need demonstrations, but it will be echoed in our life, not only in individual life, but in corporate life. Then we shall say Christ is born. That to me is the real meaning of the verse we have sung.[1] Then we will not think of a particular day in the year as that of the birth of Christ, but as an ever-recurring event which can be enacted in every life.

And the more I think of fundamental religion, and the more I think of miraculous conceptions of so many teachers who have come down from age to age and clime to clime, the more I see that there is behind them the eternal truth that I have narrated. That needs no label or declaration. It consists in the living of life, never ceasing, ever progressing towards peace.

When, therefore, one wishes "A Happy Christmas" without the meaning behind it, it becomes nothing more than an empty formula. And unless one wishes for peace for all life, one cannot wish for peace for oneself. It is a self-evident axiom, like the axioms of Euclid, that one cannot have peace unless there is in one an intense longing for peace all round. You may certainly experience peace in the midst of strife, but that happens only when to remove strife you destroy your whole life, you crucify yourself.

And so, as the miraculous birth is an eternal event, so is the Cross an eternal event in this stormy life. Therefore, we dare not think of birth without death on the Cross. Living Christ means a living Cross. Without it life is a living death.

Young India, 31-12-1931

283. NOTES

The Late Imam Saheb

In the death of Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, I have lost an old friend and co-worker, India has lost a sincere worker and Islam a gem. Who does not know of Imam Saheb's courage

[1] The proceedings had opened with the singing of a hymn celebrating Christ's Nativity: "While shepherds watched their flocks by night".

and patriotism? Despite his weak health, he was in the forefront of the assault at Dharasana and, despite his frail constitution, he made the pilgrimage to jail. Imam Saheb was a devout Muslim; he never missed his *namaz* or *roza*. He became known as Imam Saheb because he performed the function of a religious teacher in the Transvaal. He became a fakir for the sake of his country. After serving a term of imprisonment in the Transvaal, he came to live with me in Phœnix along with his family and began to live the life of a fakir. When I returned to India, he too returned. He brought with him his Malay wife too. He lost one wife after another. Later his elder daughter Fatima died, and now Imam Saheb himself has passed away. He leaves behind his daughter Amina Begum and her husband Qureshi. Both are engaged in serving the country. Imam Saheb was one of the trustees of the Ashram: he took full interest in its affairs, he observed its rules and freely associated with everyone there. To me this is a great loss and the fact that he passed away before I reached India adds further to my grief.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-12-1931

284. INTERVIEW TO REUTER

S.S. "PILSNA",
December 27, 1931

As I approach the shores of India, I am weighed down with a sense of the tremendous responsibility even as I was upon approaching London. Only this time the responsibility is a thousandfold greater.

I shall therefore take no hasty step. I shall exhaust every resource at my disposal before advising India once more to go through the fire of suffering.

I am constantly praying for God's guidance. I know He will not fail me if I remain true to my creed. Thank God, my faith in truth and non-violence for the national purpose has become strengthened by my European visit, if there was any room for further strengthening. I have no other end to serve in this life.

The Hindu, 28-12-1931

285. MESSAGE TO AMERICA

[Before *December 28, 1931*]

Tell America, as the exponent of that liberty we hunger for, not to forget our sad people in her prayers.

Home Department, Political, File No. 141, pp. 15-7, 1932. Courtesy: National Archives of India

286. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

S.S. "PILSNA",
[*December 28, 1931*][1]

Real disarmament cannot come unless the nations of the world cease to exploit one another.

Gandhiji added that without sanctions, the League of Nations could not keep peace among the nations, as was evident in the present Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria.

Q. Do you think that the application of your principle of non-violence would bring permanent peace?

A. Non-violence would be futile unless the root cause is dealt with, and the root cause in this case is the greed of nations. If there were no greed, there would be no occasion for armaments. The principle of non-violence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form. Immediately the spirit of exploitation is gone, armaments will be felt as a positive unbearable burden.

Gandhiji believed that Europe had advanced materially since his last visit fifteen years ago, but he doubted whether it had made much progress spiritually.

I think, however, that there is a greater longing for peace on the part of the people. Deep down everywhere, I noticed intense dissatisfaction and unrest on the part of the people with things as they are. That, to my mind, is not a dangerous, but a healthy sign. Whether the Governments of Europe will translate

[1] According to the source, the interview was given just before Gandhiji landed in Bombay.

this unrest into real action in the right direction remains to be seen.

Q. As a result of that unrest, do you visualize during the next score of years a gradual disappearance of monarchies for more democratic forms of Government, as evidenced by the recent change in Spain?

A. Sudden changes such as those in Spain offer no material for a reasonable forecast. By habit, too, I am not given to peeping into the future.

The Indian National leader said it was indisputable that England had failed as a first-class power, but he had faith enough in the English people to feel that they would turn their present economic distress to good account and become an example to other nations in spiritual progress.

For England's sake and for the sake of the world, I hope, England will not regain the material supremacy she enjoyed before the War, because that supremacy might be used to oppress other nations.

The Mahatma saw the British Empire disintegrating and ultimately becoming a series of separate independent units, like Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India, but he also hoped that these units would be united voluntarily for the good of mankind.

But this opinion may be due to the wish being father to the thought.

Gandhiji said that the strongest impression he carried away from Europe is that Europe cannot for any length of time sustain the artificial life its peoples are living today, because that life, he asserted, is too materialistic and too complicated.

There must be a return to simplicity and proper proportions. The flesh has taken precedence over the spirit. The machine age is ruining Western civilization. Over-production and lack of means of proper distribution may finally spell the doom of capitalistic society. The only solution I see is a return to hand industry and the emancipation of the individual from factory slavery.

Q. Would you recommend great industrial countries like England and the United States to adopt the spinning-wheel?

A. I think it would be an eventful day in the life of those countries if they adopted the spinning-wheel.

Q. Is the world growing better or worse?

A. So long as I believe in a benevolent God, I must believe that the world is getting better even though I see evidence to the contrary.

The Hindu, 1-1-1932

287. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

December 28, 1931

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

Indu gave me your letter. Somehow or other your arrest did not come upon me as a surprise. I have not yet been able to go to Kamala. I may tonight or tomorrow for certain. You will be glad to know that I have read your second series of letters to Indu. I had some suggestions to make, but of that, when perhaps we have come to our own.

Meanwhile love to you and Sherwani.

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 104

288. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

BOMBAY,
December 28, 1931

In a brief conversation with pressmen, Gandhiji stated that he had closely studied the Premier's statement and the India debate. He would deal with that subject at the public meeting tonight. One thought of the Government's latest action in arresting Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Sherwani and Abdul Ghaffar Khan as a challenge to the Congress, but it was for the Congress President to state that those Government activities amounted to a breach of the Delhi Pact.

Questioned about his attitude towards the Subcommittees set up by His Majesty's Government to carry on the Conference work, Gandhiji said that it was too early to state his attitude. All the material was not before him. It was for the Government to consider how the Committees could work if the atmosphere was uncongenial.

Gandhiji considered the Round Table Conference a debating society. It was not representative in the sense it was claimed to be. It was not a 'Round Table' in the right sense.

Asked whether he was convinced now that the signing of the truce was a great blunder, he said, "No", and added that it was an act of statesmanship. He agreed that the recent developments in Bengal, U.P. and the Frontier were a challege to the Congress, but he reserved action till the decision of the Congress Working Committee. He added the Round Table Conference was

a debating society. Asked if he believed that the Delhi Pact was dead he said it was for the Congress President to say.

The Hindu, 28-12-1931, and *The Hindustan Times*, 30-12-1931

289. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*[1]

BOMBAY,
December 28, 1931

Mahatma Gandhi denied the rumour that he was seeking an interview with the Viceroy and discussing with him the situation in the country.

The Mahatma pleaded that he had had no time to study the recent developments in the country and what he had heard from his colleagues till then was only 'titbits'. He, therefore, declined to pass any opinion on the subject. But when asked if, when the Ordinances were in force in the country, it would not be difficult for the Committees of the Round Table Conference to function in India, he vouchsafed the remark:

Well, it is very difficult. But it is for the Government to consider how the Committees shall work and function.

A pressman asked Gandhiji if he did not see a gloomy future for India if she had to go through another fight to which Gandhiji replied promptly:

Even if India has got to go through another fiery ordeal, I would not consider that a gloomy prospect in any sense of the term.

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI : But you will try your utmost to prevent another fiery ordeal?

GANDHIJI : I will strain every nerve to avoid a fiery ordeal naturally enough. But if it becomes unavoidable, it is unbecoming of a warrior to draw a long face when death is in front of him. To me it may be imprisonment or a lathi charge.

A VOICE : Or deportation.

GANDHIJI : To me imprisonment and deportation are convertible terms. They make no difference.

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI: There may be a difference in climate.

GANDHIJI : Climatic difference I do not mind. (Laughter)

[1] The interview took place at Mani Bhawan. Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose and Prabhashankar Pattani were present.

Gandhiji informed the Pressmen that he had given the most careful consideration to the statement of the Premier and had crossed its I's and dotted its I's. But he deferred the statement on it till the Azad Maidan meeting.

To a pressman who doubted the wisdom of the Congress in declaring Truce, Mahatma Gandhi retorted: It was an act of statesmanship to have signed the Delhi Truce.

The pressman argued that the Government taking cover under the white flag had flung thousands of the youths of the country into the prisons. This evoked the reply from the Mahatma:

More young men today are out than in the jail. I am unable to subscribe to your formula.

Several questions that followed were ruled out by Gandhiji on the ground that the Congress President in his official capacity was the proper man to answer them:

My opinion does not count. It is the opinion of an individual.

SOMEBODY: But the President has been asking the country all these days to wait for you. It shows that your opinion is final.

GANDHIJI: It may be final with the President.

Q. Why don't you go to Bengal. Don't you think it is advisable to go there?

GANDHIJI: It may be quite advisable. But I am a representative and not a free-lance like you. (Laughter) My wishes should be dominated in this instance by Bengal. Subhas Babu is here to advise me on the subject. But you have not yet given him a chance to address me.

Asked if Mr. M. R. Jayakar was right in his surmise, uttered at a recent meeting in Bombay that it would have been better if Gandhiji had accepted the offer of Lord Irwin to take 14 other Congress representatives with him to London, Gandhiji said:

I am convinced after having had this experience that it was a wise decision that the Congress could have come to in sending me alone.

It would have been a first-class tragedy, if 14 or 15 good servants of the nation had been sent out instead of keeping them here. In other respects also it was a good thing to have sent only one delegate. When the mandate was so absolutely clear, there was no occasion for sending more than one agent unless, of course, the Congress had distrusted its agent. They did the wisest thing in sending one man and, at that, such a wise man like me. (Laughter)

Another reporter requested the Mahatma to give his impression about the R.T.C. "in a nutshell".

GANDHIJI: My experience of the R.T.C. is that it was a debating society, and certainly not representative in the sense in which it has been claimed to be. Therefore, it was not in the right sense of the term a Round Table Conference.

Q. Is that all?

GANDHIJI: But you wanted my impressions in a nutshell. (Laughter)

Q. Why are the untouchables so angry with you?

GANDHIJI: I don't know that they are angry with me. I deny that they are angry with me.

Q. What is your attitude towards the untouchables and Depressed Classes?

GANDHIJI: My attitude is that they are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. I would love to die so that they may live, and live with perfect dignity and self-respect. My attitude is that I myself belong to the Depressed Classes.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

290. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

December 28, 1931

Cheering lasted for several minutes, when Mahatmaji began to address the meeting. He thanked the citizens of Bombay for the welcome they accorded him in the morning. But he took it as a token of their confidence in the Congress and not as a personal honour.

Last night I was expecting that I would be able to speak before you something different than what I propose to do now. But evidently God has willed otherwise. I did not know till I landed this morning that there had been firing in Peshawar, nor did I know that Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani were jailed or were to be prosecuted. I take these as Christmas presents to me from Lord Willingdon. It was natural that he should have made

[1] Held at Azad Maidan within a few hours of Gandhiji's arrival, the meeting, according to the source, was the biggest that any public speaker in Bombay had ever dreamt of. Before Gandhiji spoke, Vallabhbhai Patel in a speech welcomed Gandhiji home.

presents to me on my return home. In the Frontier Province Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, his brother and several others have been arrested and we do not know how many more will be jailed. We may not even get the news from that province. What better presents can there be for a satyagrahi than these?

If we had committed any offence and were punished for that, there would have been occasion for us to regret it. But I am as certain as there is life in me that Khan Abdul Ghaffar is a true believer in the cult of satyagraha and he has understood its meaning. I need say nothing about Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani. You know them as much as I do.

The question now before us is: what is our duty? Shall we take the hint from the action of the Government and launch a campaign of satyagraha or shall we try some other means? I cannot give you my opinion just at present.

I will only say that, if fate wills that we should go through the ordeal again, and if the Congress Working Committee decides on the renewal of the fight, I shall not hesitate to ask you to join it. But if there is any possibility of avoiding satyagraha, I shall do my utmost to prevent it and advise you to have patience. I think after years of experience India has learnt to hold herself in patience.

I was grieved to learn on board the steamer that in Bengal, two of our young girls are said to have committed a murder. It pained me as a satyagrahi, because our creed is to be ready to die and not to kill. Our fight is based on love. Even if we fight the Government, it is with the weapon of love and there can be no room for hatred in it. When I heard of that incident, I was sorry but that does not mean that there is the least justification for what the Government has been doing in Bengal. A Government has every right to punish the wrong-doers, but it does not behove a Government to victimize people for acts for which they are not responsible. There can be no justification for the Ordinances promulgated in the U.P. or the North-West Frontier Province. We cannot tolerate any of them.

I had hoped that it would be possible to find a way to co-operate with the Government. I will even now do my best to find the way out. But I must admit the signs that I have noticed have considerably weakened my hopes. And if ever we have to fight, we should be prepared to do our utmost. Ours is a fight in which one and all can join. It is a fight to court sufferings. It is a struggle to give life and not to take life. In this struggle even children can play a part.

Last year we faced lathis, but this time we must be prepared to face bullets. I do not wish that the Pathans in the Frontier alone should court bullets. If bullets are to be faced, Bombay and Gujarat also must take their share. I had said in London that, if we had to offer even a million lives for achieving freedom, I would be prepared for sacrifice without the least compunction. I believe that we must get rid of the fear of death, and when we have to court death we must embrace it as we embrace a friend. But in spite of our readiness to offer our lives, we must see to it that not even a hair of an Englishman is hurt. We must hope that by our sacrifice we shall be able to bring about a change of heart in the same Englishman who strikes us.

By my visit to Europe, my faith in non-violence has immensely increased. I believe that non-violence has the power to melt the stoniest heart. Some people thought that during my visit to Europe I would learn something new, but I honestly say that I learnt nothing new except that my faith in non-violence increased.

Another experience that I got during my visit to London was that the British Cabinet believes—and there is no reason to doubt its sincerity—that we are not fit for self-government. They believe that although the Congressmen speak of non-violence, they do not honestly believe in it. The reason is that in the reports they get from their officials in India, it is represented that Indians are unfit for self-government, and that Congress has no control over the masses. That is why they have been declaring Congress organizations unlawful. Our duty is not to find fault with the Englishmen nor to be angry with them, but to get rid of our shortcomings and to act up to the creed of non-violence.

Maybe that many of you have accepted it as a policy, but so long as the Congress has adopted that creed, we must stick fast to it. By our actions we must prove beyond doubt that we, Congressmen, exist not to harm anyone, but to protect others at the cost of our own lives. Congress stands to achieve freedom by sacrificing lives. Those who do not subscribe to that view had better leave the Congress. If we did that, we shall enhance the influence and reputation that we have earned, and if we lose it, we will not be able to attain freedom.

If we have not so far been able to attain swaraj, it does not mean that we should give up the attempt. India has not only to attain her freedom but also to give the message of peace and non-violence to the world. Even if years are required to achieve that object, it should not dishearten us.

I hear people saying that if Congress gave up satyagraha, it would be able to deal with the Government. I must make it clear that Congress and satyagraha are inseparable. In satyagraha lies the power of the Congress, and the Government will have ultimately to come to terms with the Congress. I made this clear in London and I repeat it today before you and the whole world. The Congress does not belong to the Hindus alone. It stands equally for Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jews and, in fact, all those who have made India their home. Congress stands for those Englishmen also who have made India their home. I made the claim in London on behalf of the Congress that it stands for the whole of India and I repeat it here. Its influence is bound to increase.

We could not solve the communal problem in London. I knew that it could never be solved there. It can be solved by the Congress and it is doing all that it can to solve it. The remedy is to serve all classes and communities. If the Congress serves the Sikhs and Muslims, they are sure to claim the Congress as their own.

One word about the untouchables. I claim myself to be one of them. I have served them for my whole life. I started their service even before I took up Congress work. How can I then do anything that will harm them? The untouchables have been so much oppressed by the caste Hindus that we can find no parallel to it in any other religion. Therefore, if they get angry and do harm to ten or twenty Hindus, it should not give us cause to retaliate. I am not prepared for any concession like reservation of seats, etc., to the untouchables, because I believe that it would be perpetuating untouchability. Let the future legislatures of free India be filled with untouchables alone, but let them come in as equals. Unless we raise them to our level, our freedom will be futile. So long as a person, whether man or woman, touchable or untouchable, rich or poor, is oppressed and does not enjoy equal rights with other citizens of the country, we cannot enjoy freedom. It will be slavery in the garb of freedom. What I did in London was only to safeguard their rights.

I had a mind to speak on many things. I had to place before you an account of what I did in London in connection with the R.T.C. If I am left free, I may do it on some other occasion or you may know it through other means.

What I have to tell you now is that, if there is to be a fight, be prepared for every sacrifice, but take a pledge that you will not do harm to others. I will do all that lies within the power of a

human being to prevent another fiery ordeal, but if I find that there is no other way out, I will not hesitate to call upon you to go through it, whatever the magnitude of sufferings may be. May God give us the strength to suffer and sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

291. SPEECH AT WELFARE OF INDIA LEAGUE, BOMBAY[1]

December 28, 1931

When I received the cable from Mr. David just before I left England inviting me to attend this meeting, I felt it was impossible for me to avoid this invitation. And so I cabled him in reply asking to arrange the time with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, because naturally he has to his disposal all the time at my disposal. It is a great pleasure to me to be able to address you this evening.

My intention when I accepted this invitation was to speak to you this evening on what I saw in England. But, on landing in India, all my plans have been upset by the startling news that I have heard about the situation here. I wished to speak to you and to the Congress about the many things I have seen in England and in Europe. They have got their dark side as also the bright side of the picture. There were things I saw from which I had every reason for hope. But there were also things which held out no hopes at all. I would gladly have spoken to you what I saw in England and in Europe. But now with the situation before me as it is, I shall have to speak to you largely about the events that face me and face you as those who want to promote the welfare of this country.

But I want to assure you that, wherever I went in London, in England or in Europe, I was surrounded with the greatest amount of affection and I felt that there was no truth in Kipling's saying that the East and West would never meet. I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my three months' stay in England and Europe that has made me feel that, after all, East is East and West is West. On the contrary, I have been convinced

[1] The meeting, held at Majestic Hotel at 10 p.m., was presided over by Sir Stanley Reed. Among those present were Prabhashankar Pattani, Pheroz Sethna, Nassarvanji Choksy, Vallabhbhai Patel and some members of the Congress Working Committee.

more than ever that human nature is much the same, no matter in what clime it flourishes, that if you approached people with trust and affection, you would have tenfold and thousandfold affection returned to you.

Though I cannot say I have achieved anything from the R.T.C. in terms of the Congress demand, I do not consider my visit to England has been useless. On the contrary, I feel that it was a good thing that I was able to go through this experience, which has further enabled me to put to test the efficiency of the methods that I have been employing for the last 30 years in connection with public questions. But I must close this part of my speech about my experiences, because instead of finding an echo of this experience in India, I find myself face to face with grim facts.

Whilst I could not say that the Round Table Conference or the Prime Minister's declaration has offered anything that would positively satisfy the Congress, I could say that there was an honest effort on the part of the British Ministers to understand the Indian situation, although they could not appreciate the Indian viewpoint as I conceive it. Instead of finding an atmosphere responsive to the expectations raised by the Prime Minister's declarations, supported by the speech of the Secretary of State for India, I find that there is absolutely no atmosphere to answer the granting of limited responsibility to India, as had been defined in the speech of the Secretary of State for India.

I am here to testify that of all the Ministers I had the privilege of meeting I found the Secretary of State for India to be an honest and frank-hearted Englishman. I had no difficulty in understanding what was at the back of his mind and every interview with him brought me nearer to him and we parted as the best of friends, as I did with all the other Ministers.

But when I come here, I find a different order of things altogether. Here is the Frontier trouble. Side by side with the declaration that the Frontier Province is about to be placed on the same footing as the other provinces, you find in that Province today an Ordinance for which I cannot find any parallel whatsoever. If you have not studied it thoroughly, I commend it to you. I have not myself studied it carefully. I have gone through the brief Press reports that are available. But I cannot tell myself that this is a human piece of legislation, if at all it can be called legislation.

This Ordinance gives no protection for life or property. The ostensible aim of this Ordinance is to put down the activities of the

brave people of the Frontier with a heavy hand. I know Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his band of Khudai Khidmatgars. But I do not know of anything that has been done by these Red Shirts —the Khudai Khidmatgars—which means the servants of God. I know of the greatness of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He is a brave Pathan. He is a simple-hearted, sincere and honest man and he walks in the fear of God. Even some of the officials in the North-West Frontier have testified to his honesty. But now he has been deported with a band of his men.

And what is his crime? His crime is that he wanted independence for his Province and for India, his crime is that he did not attend the Durbar that was held recently to consider the ways and means to give a new form of government to that Province. Beyond that he had done nothing, neither have any of those thousands of followers of his done anything. Was it their crime that they were wearing red shirts? And on top of this we have received reports that they have been shot down for defying the Ordinance. Civil disobedience should be punished because that is the essence of civil disobedience. A civil resister courts suffering and punishment. But I have not seen or heard anywhere that the penalty for defying law, apart from violence done by the civil resisters, is to meet them with bullets. We have already reports that 14 people have been killed when the troops opened fire on a crowd of Red Shirts and spectators. We have no report of the casualties when the troops fired on a second occasion on a body of 2,000 Red Shirts. The casualties must be severer. More is perhaps to follow.

This is certainly an exceedingly unhappy augury for changing the Frontier Province into an autonomous province. It is a bad augury that one of its bravest men should have been deported at this time and several men killed because they have shown themselves to be brave in defying an Ordinance which is only legalized martial law.

Now I come to the United Provinces. And what do I find there? Here Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested. And what did they do? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to attend a conference that was to be held. But, instead of attending it, what he did was to postpone it to a later date because of some conditions that have been imposed by the Government which he thought were not consistent with self-respect. He postponed it pending the decisions of the Congress Working Committee which is meeting here tomorrow. He wanted to ascertain what steps should be taken after consultation with me and

the Working Committee members in the light of my experience at the Round Table Conference. But the Government served an order on him that he should not leave the limits of the Allahabad Municipality without taking permission from the Government authorities. He wrote a letter to the Magistrate intimating his intention to proceed to Bombay to receive me. But he and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested.

But the arrests do not worry me at all. But it is the Ordinance that is now in existence in the U.P. which troubles me very much. It is almost of the same type as the Frontier Ordinance. There are enough Ordinances to the credit of Lord Irwin. But there are already thirteen Ordinances to Lord Willingdon's credit. These thirteen Ordinances outdo all Lord Irwin's Ordinances by their severity.

Now I pass on to Bengal. I might be told in Bengal you cannot possibly complain about the Ordinance because crime has been committed there. Some Bengali youths have run amuck and committed assassination. I have always been shocked by murderous violence. But I am more pained now that I hear that even girls have taken to these deeds of terrorism. But, because a few persons ran amuck, how can the whole Province be emasculated? The effect of it will be to wean away even the sympathizers of the Government as an Ordinance such as prevails there interferes with the everyday life of the people of that Province. I have discussed this Ordinance with many public men in England and there was nothing but condemnation for the same.

This, in brief, is the picture of the situation I find myself face to face with. There does not appear to be any choice for me.

But at the same time I have pledged myself to so many British friends that I would try my level best, in spite of the disappointment at the Round Table Conference so far as the Congress demand is concerned, to continue co-operation with the Government. But, from what I have seen since I landed, I must confess to you that I see very little hope for tendering any co-operation unless I lose all my sense of self-respect.

I would be doing the greatest injustice to myself and to the nation if I advised co-operation now unless I could see some light dawn on the horizon which just now seems to be in impenetrable darkness.

I do not know how you, the members of the Welfare of India League, view these Ordinances. But I assure you that I shall strain every nerve to see, if I could not tender co-operation on honour-

able lines, to induce Government to withdraw or revise these Ordinances.

The Congress is charged with trying to run a parallel Government by the Governor of the United Provinces. I do not see what is wrong in running parallel Governments, so long as they are run on non-violent lines and in the interest of the people. What is wrong in a private organization of individuals running hospitals? What even if they run, side by side with Government law courts, arbitration courts where justice could be had at less cost to the people.

The Government should welcome such enterprises and give every encouragement to them. If the Congress is running a peasant organization, as it is running today, for the relief and the welfare of the peasants, what is wrong in that? I would welcome it if I were the Governor.

The Congress does intend to displace this Government at some time. If the Congress is not able to take charge of the Government, then there is no hope of swaraj coming. The question was put to the Congress: "Are you ready to take over the Defence of the country? Are you ready to take over the Finance of the country and also take over the obligations of the country?"

I replied: "It is ready. The Congress is undoubtedly ready to take over charge of Defence, of Finance and also of the obligations you might consider India is liable for. But only in a truly businesslike way they should get all the obligations examined by an impartial examiner. Unless the Congress tries its hand at these matters, how can it learn and thrive?"

So what is there disloyal or seditious in organizations trying to run parallel Governments, based on the goodwill of the people whom the organization claims to serve.

It was the very foundation of the Congress to be able one day to replace the present Government. It has been laid down by such eminent persons like Dadabhai Naoroji and many other Englishmen and Indians. So after its life of more than half a century, if it is not able to run a parallel Government, I would say we should all be ashamed of it.

The Congress has done nothing immoral, nothing ungentlemanly. It is not a secret organization. It always spreads out its cards on the table. And if still the Government should mistrust it as they seem to, then all I can say is that we will have to make our power felt or allow ourselves to perish in doing so.

I would request you, members of the Welfare of India League, to direct me in this matter. I have placed before you, so to say,

my puzzle. If the Congress is not trusted, how can it give co-operation? The welfare of India is a common interest between you and me and the Congress. The Congress does not live for anything else than the welfare of India and I have myself no other aim in living this life. It may be that I and the Congress are going the wrong way about it. I am open to correction and conviction. So I would request you all to study the situation in the light of my speech and I shall be glad to answer any questions that you may put to me based on my speech for better understanding and for my own guidance.

Q. Will you co-operate with the working of the various R. T. C. Committees, which would commence work in India soon if all the Ordinances are withdrawn?

A. I have already explained that the Ordinances block the way. Firstly, the Ordinances must go. Secondly, the Congress must be satisfied that its goal can be reached through co-operation with the Committees. I can hold out no hope of the Congress reducing its demands. But if the Congress is satisfied that the door is open for argument and negotiation in regard to its demands, I would advise the Congress to tender its co-operation in the work of the Committees.

Q. Before condemning these Ordinances as you have done, why don't you please proceed to the Provinces where these Ordinances are in force and study the conditions there personally and see if they are not justified?

A. I would be most glad to do so if the Government permitted me to do so. I have tried several times to go to the Frontier Province. But on all these occasions the Government have stood in the way, at least the Government have not shown any encouragement for this move of co-operation. I am divulging no official secret to you when I say that when the Delhi Pact was signed, Ghaffar Khan was on the brain of the Executive. I requested Lord Irwin to allow me to go to the Frontier. But Lord Irwin, after consultation with the Commissioner of the Frontier, came to the conclusion that it was a dangerous thing to send me there. (Laughter) I was told that I would create ferment there and whatever I might say would be misinterpreted to the tribesmen. (Laughter) I tried another time in Simla with Lord Willingdon with no better success. I could have proceeded without taking permission, but I did not want to embarrass the Government. If the Government would permit me to proceed to the Frontier tomorrow, I shall rush to that place. So, if those of you here who have got the ear of the Government can procure for

me this permission, I shall directly start for the Frontier, I would love to go there tomorrow itself.

Q. Will you not agree to go to the Frontier and Bengal on Government's terms?

A. No, I cannot. If Government will allow me to serve them, it must be on my own terms. I cannot go to the brave Abdul Ghaffar Khan and tell him that it is wrong to long for independence for the Frontier or for India. If you want a bird to fly, you must not clip its wings and then say: you can fly now. That is what the Government want to do. They clip my wings and then want me to fly. The Government must let me grow in strength, if they will let me serve them.

I can really make things easy. The Government knows that Abdul Ghaffar Khan would pay heed to my words. I have lived with the Pathans and moved with them. I have also been assaulted by them and that has ever been a link between they and me. (Laughter) So long as he (Ghaffar Khan) is satisfied that I have not betrayed the cause, he would certainly abide by my advice. It was on my advice that he went and saw the Commissioner some time ago. But the Government will not accept my services.

I also intend to visit Bengal. The situation is different in regard to Bengal. I need not ask for permission to go to Bengal. But once I go to Bengal, I will write to the Government and place my co-operation at their service as I will at the service of the people of Bengal. It will be for the Government to accept my service or not. But I will not go to Chittagong or Hijli without asking the Bengal Government if I may do so without embarrassment to them. I can go to the Frontier, I can go to Chittagong and to Hijli, whether the Government will it or not. I can practise civil disobedience if the authorities issue prohibitory orders. But I will not go to the Frontier, Chittagong or Hijli, at the cost of practising civil disobedience. If I do so, I will be embarrassing the Government greatly which is what I do not want to do. If I decide to offer civil disobedience, I shall choose, as a satyagrahi, a ground that offers to the Government the minimum embarrassment and puts the Government in the wrong.

Q. If you are satisfied that there is a seditious organization existing in Bengal, would you ask for the repeal of the Ordinances?

A. The word 'sedition' is a very elastic term. But I understand the spirit of the question. If these organizations are trying

to subvert law and order and trying to usurp the powers of the Government, it is certainly the duty of the Government to deal with such activities. But all the difference lies in the method of dealing with the same. The same question was put to me in England: "How would you deal with terrorism if the Congress were running the Government?" I then replied: "Give me the power and I shall show that." I would deal with an organization of that character in the most sympathetic manner. There is the ordinary law which could alone deal with any kind of crime. Then why have recourse to Ordinances, which only help to estrange the feelings of the people on whom it operates. I yield to none in my condemnation of crimes, but these Ordinances instead of weaning away people from terrorism only accentuate it.

No society would tolerate the taking of innocent lives as was done by the Bengal youths. But why punish 50,000 for the crime of five? If I were the Secretary of State or the Governor-General, I would ask the Bengal Governor to resign his place when he asked for the promulgation of an Ordinance. But I would not rest there. I would dive into the root cause of this discontent and try to cure that first.

The Governor should invite the prominent leaders into his secret chamber and take them into his confidence and discuss the question threadbare and find out the means to check and stop such crime.

Mutual trust is what he wants. The Archbishop of Canterbury told me that he had understood what was at the back of the Indian problem and he had understood it well when he said that it is mutual trust we want.

Bengal has its grievances. The Bengal youths are courageous, emotional and patriotic and so speeches like those delivered in the House of Commons decrying the bravery of Bengal drive them to extremes. As I said before, I yield to none, not even Englishmen, in my condemnation of crime. But it should be dealt within the ordinary course of law.

The Congress creed of non-violence has done a great deal to check terrorism. But the methods of General Dyer would not do. I have no enmity or irritation against General Dyer. I know he was an honest man who believed in what he was doing and who justified his actions in India.

But the Dyer method is wrong. English lives in India must not be saved by Dyer methods.

The atmosphere created by the Ordinances is certainly not conducive to hammering out a Constitution for the country as it is

proposed to do. If you think young India will look at any Constitution evolved in the atmosphere of the Ordinances, it is a forlorn hope.

It is no use saying that Indian loyalists say 'yes' to Government in support of these methods. I tell you even these loyalists when they say 'yes' to the Government, they say at the back of their minds 'no'. As one who is of the people, who lives amongst them, who lives for them, I claim to know the reaction of the Indian mind to these Ordinances better than the Governor-General who issues these Ordinances living in Simla or Delhi, better than all his advisers put together.

Q. Would you not try to stamp out the terrorist movement to the exclusion of all your other activities?

A. The Congress campaign of non-violence, I firmly believe, has done a great deal to check terrorism. I am speaking with evidence. I know of any number of cases in which the Congress message has won to the cause of non-violence ex-revolutionaries. Today, I can vouch for their non-violence as I can vouch for my own. These patriotic young men are engaged in constructive work.

Q. If you were in power, would you allow another organization to run a parallel Government and usurp your place?

A. When I said that I did not see any harm in organizations running parallel Governments, I did not mean usurpation. My friend has put a word into my mouth which I never used. If these organizations run a parallel Government for the good of the people, I would certainly give them all encouragement. See what Dictator Mussolini is doing in Italy. He never interferes with voluntary activities for the betterment of the country.

I am dying for co-operation and shall not rest till I have explored all avenues. I appeal to you, Englishmen and women, to ponder over the facts I have placed before you tonight and do your bit for creating an atmosphere of love and peace in this country.

The Hindu, 31-12-1931

292. TELEGRAM TO VICEROY[1]

December 29, 1931

I WAS UNPREPARED ON LANDING YESTERDAY TO FIND FRONTIER AND U.P. ORDINANCES SHOOTINGS IN FRONTIER AND ARRESTS OF VALUED COMRADES IN BOTH ON TOP OF THE BENGAL ORDINANCE AWAITING ME. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER I AM TO REGARD THESE AS INDICATION THAT FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN US ARE CLOSED OR WHETHER YOU EXPECT ME STILL TO SEE YOU AND RECEIVE GUIDANCE FROM YOU AS TO THE COURSE I AM TO PURSUE IN ADVISING THE CONGRESS. I WOULD ESTEEM A WIRE IN REPLY.[1]

India in 1931-32

293. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY[2]

December 31, 1931

During one or two days more of freedom that I have left, let us say our prayers in peace.

The Hindustan Times, 3-1-1932

294. DIARY, 1931

LONDON, OCTOBER 14, WEDNESDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Discussion about the army with persons called together by Sir Samuel Hoare; talk with Benthall, talk with Jinnah.

LONDON, OCTOBER 15, THURSDAY

Spun 176 rounds. Talk with Sir Samuel Hoare; talk with Sapru, Jayakar and others, also students' function. Talk with Latifi.

[1] For the Viceroy's reply dated December 31, *vide* Appendix III.

[2] The meeting was held in the evening in the public garden near Gandhiji's camp. Gandhiji spoke in Gujarati. Earlier the Working Committee had considered the Viceroy's telegram which was received at 4 p.m.

LONDON, OCTOBER 16, FRIDAY

Spun 162 rounds. The Conference, Press lunch, Mussalmans, India Office, Prohibition meeting, Nawab Saheb. Now it is 1 o'clock.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 17, SATURDAY

Spun 127 rounds. Speech for gramophone recording;[1] Madgaonkar; reprimanded Maud for renting a house;[2] visit to Nottingham, Birmingham in the evening; Andrews arrived; Devdas returned to Knightsbridge.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 18, SUNDAY

Spun 129 rounds. Bishop Barnes; the Steiner school; Dr. Parghi, meeting of members of Ashram.[3]

LONDON, OCTOBER 19, MONDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Left Birmingham in the morning. Shuaib met me three or four times. Sardar Ujjal Singh, talk with Indian Princes.

LONDON, OCTOBER 20, TUESDAY

Spun 176 rounds. Upton Close called; Archbishop of Canterbury, Samuel Hoare, Elmhurst; meeting at Chatham House.

LONDON, OCTOBER 21, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Lord Irwin, meeting of missionaries; the Rani of Cooch-Behar

LONDON, OCTOBER 22, THURSDAY

Spun 153 rounds. Talk with Sir Mirza at the Bikaner get-together; met Sapru and others at Malaviyaji's. Reached Kingsley Hall today at 8.45 p. m.

ETON, OCTOBER 23, FRIDAY

Spun 221 rounds. Spoke in Federal Structure Committee on Federal Court; visited Agricultural Exhibition in the evening. Then had a talk with Sapru and others. Went to Eton at night. Spoke to youths there.

[1] The reference is to the recording of a portion of an article: "God Is", published in *Young India*, 11-10-1928; *vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 347-50.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to H. S. L. Polak", p. 377.

[3] Presumably, the Woodbrooke Settlement; *vide* footnote 1, p. 184.

OXFORD, OCTOBER 24, SATURDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Left Eton in the morning; arrived at Oxford. On the way called at the house of Col. Maddock. Then lunched at the residence of Mira's uncle. Spent two hours with the Fellows at Oxford. Later at night in the Indian Majlis. Lala Dunichand's son called.

OXFORD, OCTOBER 25, SUNDAY

Spun 199 rounds. In the morning at Thompsons' met Prof. Murray, Sadler and others. Then met Sir Henry Lawrence, Mrs. Elwin, the Ruskin Society, then discussion with Oxford dons; at night with the Rhode scholars.

LONDON, OCTOBER 26, MONDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Reached London at 10.15. Met Sapru and others. The Committee. Called on Nawab Saheb at night. It is now 12.30 a. m.

LONDON, OCTOBER 27, TUESDAY

Spun 165 rounds. Mrs. Sheridan had slept here. Talked with Menon at night at Polak's.

LONDON, OCTOBER 28, WEDNESDAY

Spun 181 rounds. Met Madame M...[1], Madame Montessori. Mira's illness.

LONDON, OCTOBER 29, THURSDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Could not rise today at 3 o'clock. Was late by an hour. Many persons called. Felt mentally agitated. Talked with Dutta. Met Sapru and others at Malaviyaji's. Met Strakosch and Sir Basil Blackett in the evening. At night met Baba and other youths.

LONDON, OCTOBER 30, FRIDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Vegetarian lunch, meeting with Layton. The Commonwealth of India League.

CAMBRIDGE, OCTOBER 31, SATURDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Met Quaker friends. Met Sardar Ujjal Singh at Cambridge at 5 o'clock.

[1] The correct spelling of the name cannot be ascertained; probably a relation of Madame Montessory.

CAMBRIDGE, NOVEMBER 1, SUNDAY

Spun 192 rounds. Visited Pemberton College in the morning. Present at the meeting held there were Lowes Dickinson, Evelyn Wrench and others. The discussion lasted three hours. Then made a few visits. Saw Andrews's old room, visited King's Chapel. In the evening Nicholson called. At night meeting of the Indian Majlis. Commenced silence at 9.38 p.m.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 2, MONDAY

Spun 186 rounds. Reached London from Cambridge at 10.30. The Committee continued its sitting. Then went to Malaviyaji's. Then Jivraj, Bomanji and others came. Shah came at Bow.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 3, TUESDAY

Spun 161 rounds. MacDonald, Ali Imam; Irwin's portrait; to Malaviyaji's; children's gathering, Baldwin, Hoare, international students, Bomanji.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 4, WEDNESDAY

Spun 173 rounds. The Conference; Sir Daniel Hamilton; to Malaviyaji's, doctor's, Turkish general.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 5, THURSDAY

Spun 220 rounds. The Emperor's party; met the members of the Postal Workers' Union; Sidney Walton.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 6, FRIDAY

Spun 172 rounds. Bernard Shaw and his wife called. Sir Darcy Lindsay called. Meeting with Sir John Maynard, Sapru and others; Letter to MacDonald; Jaiji came with me at night.

OXFORD, NOVEMBER 7, SATURDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Reached Oxford at 11 o'clock in the morning. Had talk with Malcolm MacDonald, Prof. Murray. Andrews arrived in the evening; at night had talk with Lord Lothian, Coupland was present.

OXFORD, NOVEMBER 8, SUNDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Discussions all day long. Corbett had come. Sarojini came in the evening. Commenced silence at 3.50 p.m.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 9, MONDAY

Spun 192 rounds. Came to London from Oxford. Wrote a number of letters. Purushottamdas's party; talk with Corbett;

prayer and dinner at Rameshwardas's, meeting at Friends' House,[1] Reynolds called on me.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 10, TUESDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Sapru and others came. Talked with them. Met Corbett and Mrs. Subbaroyan. London School of Economics, Holborn Restaurant.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 11, WEDNESDAY

Spun 169 rounds. Sir Mirza Ismail called in the morning. Then visited Lady Astor with Muriel. To Malaviyaji's at 2.30. Thereafter went to Mr. Whitley's, then met Red Cross women at 8 o'clock.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 12, THURSDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Miss Molteno's relative, Dr. Stanley Reed; the Horrabin's committee at Malaviyaji's. Letters to Hoare, MacDonald[2].

LONDON, NOVEMBER 13, FRIDAY

Spun 147 rounds. The Minority Committee, Smuts, the Aga Khan and others, Mr. Benn and others, Smuts, Lansbury, the Westminster School, Birla, representative of the *News Chronicle*. Now it is midnight.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 14, SATURDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Called on Lord Irwin, then saw Benn and Lees-Smith; then the Aga Khan and others. Dr. Moonje and others at night at Malaviyaji's. It is early today.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 15, SUNDAY

Spun 221 rounds. To Sastri's at 10 o'clock, then to Malaviyaji's, then home. Slept a little today. Had talks with an Italian lady; in the evening went to Sir Samuel Hoare's residence; at night met Catto, Benthall and Carr at Birla's.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 16, MONDAY

Spun 166 rounds. The Committee. Lord Reading, Carr and Benthall.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 17, TUESDAY

Spun 178 rounds. The Committee, the Prime Minister, Smuts, Corbett, Lothian, Lady Astor, Benthall and others.

[1] This was organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

[2] This letter actually bore the date November 14.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 18, WEDNESDAY

Spun 167 rounds. Rev. Hayes, Philip, the Committee, Women's meeting, Lloyd George for three and a half hours. Now it is 1 o'clock.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 19, THURSDAY

Spun 183 rounds. The Committee, Brockway, speech in the Committee on racial discrimination and communal differences.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 20, FRIDAY

Spun 165 rounds. Foley and others called. Met Benthall and others in the evening. Thereafter Vegetarian Society meeting and the post office.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 21, SATURDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Met Findlater Stewart, Purushottamdas, Dinshaw Mulla, Patak and others. Cable to Vallabhbhai.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 22, SUNDAY

Spun 194 rounds. Meeting at Malaviyaji's; met Sen Gupta; slept for one and a half hours in the afternoon. Commenced silence at 3.15.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 23, MONDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Saw Dagenham's Kingsley Hall, met Corbett, Polak, Maud Cheeseman.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 24, TUESDAY

Spun 194 rounds. Met MacDonald, Sankey and Hoare in the morning. In the evening met Dr. Sapru and others. Also Lees-Smith. Cable from Vallabhbhai. Severe cold.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 25, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Made two speeches in the Committee. Mirza and Dr. Ambedkar came in the evening. Visited a Catholic church.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 26, THURSDAY

Spun 171 rounds. The Committee; Lord Irwin; went to Deepchand Zaveri's residence.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 27, FRIDAY

Spun 174 rounds. Andrews left for S. Africa. Met Samuel Hoare. Went to Bhandari's; then met Lansbury.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 28, SATURDAY

Spun 174 rounds. The Plenary Session. Hoare consulted me about a resolution to thank His Majesty the King-Emperor. I declined to be present. Cables to Vallabhbhai and Satis Babu.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 29, SUNDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Met Sir Findlater Stewart. Lees-Smith came at night.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 30, MONDAY

Spun 157 rounds. Made a day-long speech in the Committee. Reached home at 3 o'clock in the morning. Meeting at Horrabin's at 8.30.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, TUESDAY

Spun 184 rounds. The Conference concluded. Had a talk with Sapru and others. Also with Carr and Benthall.

LONDON, DECEMBER 2, WEDNESDAY

Spun 166 rounds. Felt feverish today. Attended the Quakers' silent worship.

LONDON, DECEMBER 3, THURSDAY

Spun 174 rounds. Meeting at Horrabin's at night. In the afternoon met Lord Lothian, journalists. It is midnight now.

LONDON, DECEMBER 4, FRIDAY

Spun 175 rounds. Met MacDonald and Hoare.

PARIS, DECEMBER 5, SATURDAY

Spun 151 rounds. Left London in the morning. Am accompanied by Evans, Rogers, Maud, Muriel, Shamrao. Reached Paris in the evening. A big crowd there. A reception by the Indians.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 6, SUNDAY

Spun 167 rounds. Left Paris in the morning. Muriel stayed behind. Arrived at Villeneuve in the evening. Meeting with Rolland, with journalists.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 7, MONDAY

Spun 185 rounds. From 10 to 12.30 with Rolland. Did not go for a walk in the morning because of the rain but had sound sleep. When the sun appeared in the afternoon, I went for a stroll.

Wrote letters to Hoare in the evening. Cable from Vallabhbhai; replied to it. Cable to Sir Jagdish Bose, to Ghose.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 8, TUESDAY

Spun 170 rounds. Spent two and half hours in the morning with Rolland. Three meetings in the afternoon in Lausanne. Returned at midnight.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 9, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Visited a poor woman's house and International Sanatorium; held prayers at Romain Rolland's house. Presented a shawl from Madame Cama to Madeleine Rolland.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 10, THURSDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Meeting in Geneva, talks with Rolland, speech at a Chillon School, talk with Toma, talk with the Arabs.

ON WAY TO ROME, DECEMBER 11, FRIDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Talk with Rolland; Sir Cowasji met me. Left Villeneuve at 2.30. Girls from Indu's school called. Was provided a State car in Milan. Large crowds had gathered on the way.

ROME, DECEMBER 12, SATURDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Arrived at Rome at 8.30 in the morning. Received letter to the effect that the Pope could not receive me. Three of us stayed with General Moris, the others in a hotel. Went to see the Vatican in the afternoon. At 6 o'clock Mussolini. £ 20 to Maud.

ON WAY TO BRINDISI, DECEMBER 13, SUNDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Tolstoy's daughter came in the morning; schools for young people, concessions to women, the forum, a gathering at Scarpa's, the Princess called and Amanullah's secretary. Left at 10.40 at night. The Privats are with me.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 14, MONDAY

Spun 137 rounds. Reached Brindisi in the morning. Evans, Rogers returned. s.s. *Pilsna* sailed at 12.30. The deck is no good, hence there will be some inconvenience. It is quite cold here. Vithalbhai is with me.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 15, TUESDAY

Spun 172 rounds. A little conversation with the captain.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 16, WEDNESDAY

Spun 184 rounds. Had a look over the ship accompanied by the captain. Talk with Sir Akbar.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 17, THURSDAY

Spun 190 rounds. Arrived at Port Said at 11 o'clock. Sindhis and Egyptians came to fetch me. But as there was to be no halt at Suez, I could not go. The Sindhis presented me a purse of about Rs. 1,500.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 18, FRIDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Left Suez at 5.30. Justice Holland, Lalkaka and others met me. Read the *bhajans* revised by Hoyland.[1]

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 19, SATURDAY

Spun 170 rounds. Commenced writing with the right hand from today. Slept thrice during the day. Wrote letters. Read Hoyland's book, *The Cross Moves East.*

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 20, SUNDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Today also slept a lot during the day. Read and wrote a little. Talked with Vithalbhai.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 21, MONDAY

Spun 170 rounds. We are nearing Aden. Was able to sleep a little less during the day today. Wrote an article[2] for *Indian News.* Wrote letters. Completed the one to Mussolini.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 22, TUESDAY

Spun 175 rounds. Arrived at Aden at 12.30 in the morning; went ashore; there was a meeting; visited Suraj's residence. Met the Resident Col. Riley. Returned to the ship at 4.30. Collected about Rs. 4,000. Today I have pain in the left side of the chest. The steamer weighed anchor at 5 o'clock.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 23, WEDNESDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Did not feel all right today. Ate only figs in the afternoon, took nothing in the evening. Slept well during the day. Completed an article[3] for *Young India.* A Bulgarian artist came to paint my portrait.

[1] English rendering of hymns from the *Ashram Bhajanavali* made by Gandhiji during his detention in Yeravda Prison in the previous year; *vide* Vol. XLIV, footnote 2, p. 386.

[2] "The Indian Army"; *vide* pp. 430-31.

[3] "A Retrospect"; *vide* pp. 432-36.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 24, THURSDAY

Spun 172 rounds. Talked with the German wife of an Italian journalist. Wrote down something for Mills. Talked with Mrs. Kabraji last night. Took castor oil at 2 o'clock in the morning. Had a good motion.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 25, FRIDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Am reading report of the House of Commons debate on the Prime Minister's speech at the Round Table Conference. Had a talk with Masani in the evening.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 26, SATURDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Talked with Sir Akbar Hydari, saw the Princess of Hyderabad. Talked with Vithalbhai.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 27, SUNDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Shafi Dawoodi called. Commenced silence at 12 o'clock. Had to speak to Mirabehn about her lack of generosity. Wrote down a message for Mills.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 28, MONDAY

Spun 184 rounds. Arrived at Bombay in the morning. Great welcome, mammoth meeting, the Welfare League, etc.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 29, TUESDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Talked with Subhasbabu, representatives of Andhra, Karnatak, etc. The Working Committee, telegram to the Viceroy, letter to Sir Fazli.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 30, WEDNESDAY

Spun 214 rounds. The Stree Seva Dal in Matunga, talked with Raghvir Singh, the Working Committee, the doctor examined me. Visited Sir Chinubhai and enquired about his health. Talked with Jamnadas, with Kaka, with Jayaprakash.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 31, THURSDAY

Spun 177 rounds. The Viceroy's telegram arrived. Sent a reply.[1] Completed drafting of a resolution at 1.30 a. m. in the night. Then spun. Now it is 2.45. Lalji Sheth, Modi called. Recited morning prayers today on the way, then went to visit the Sevikas. Held the evening prayer in the Lady Northcote Orphanage.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 19337

[1] *Vide* pp. 472-6.

295. *RESOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE*[1]

BOMBAY,
[January 1, 1932]

The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi's account of his visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extraordinary Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, the United Provinces and the Frontier Province and by the actions of the authorities including the numerous arrests made among those of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Sherwani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and by the shootings in the Frontier Province of innocent men resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him. The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other Provinces and the telegram from His Excellency seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Congress utterly impossible unless the Government policy is radically changed. These acts and the telegram betray no intention on the part of bureaucracy to hand power to the people and are calculated to demoralize the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress from which co-operation is expected by the Government. The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism on any account whatsoever resorted to by individuals such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns with equal force terrorism practised [by the Government] by its recent Acts and Ordinances. The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the nation especially when through its greatest political mouthpiece—the Congress—it is pledged to non-violence for achieving swaraj. But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seeks to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in deal-

[1] This was drafted by Gandhiji; *vide* "Talk with Welfare of India League Deputation", pp.479-80 and "Diary, 1931", entry under December 31. The text of this was telegraphed to the Viceroy along with the following item.

ing with the known cause that prompts such crime. If Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province have still less. The Working Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the United Provinces for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress, as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of taxes if they fail, as in the United Provinces they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods. In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Working General Secretary of the Congress, who were proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have gone even beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part in Bombay in a no-tax campaign in the United Provinces. So far as the Frontier Province is concerned, on the Government's own showing there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers. The Working Committee regards the shootings in that Province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier Province upon their courage and endurance, and the Working Committee has no doubt that, if the brave people of the Frontier Province retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations, their blood and their sufferings would advance the cause of India's independence. The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial enquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the ordinary courts of law and legislative machinery, and the necessity of several acts committed thereunder. And thereafter, if a proper enquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence, it will be prepared to assist the enquiry by leading evidence before it. The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debates in the Houses of Parliament and regards the declaration as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand and places on record its opinion that nothing short of Complete Independence,

carrying full control over the Defence and External Affairs and Finance with such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of the nation, can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory. The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table Conference to regard the Congress as representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the nation as a whole without distinction of caste, creed or colour. At the same time, the Committee recognizes with sorrow that communal harmony could not be attained at the said Conference. The Working Committee invites the nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the nation as a whole and promote an atmosphere that would make a Constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the nation. Meanwhile, the Working Committee is prepared to tender co-operation to the Government provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram and adequate relief is granted in respect of the Ordinances and its recent Acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for Complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives pending the attainment of such independence. The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact. In the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming, the Working Committee calls upon the nation to resume civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes under the following conditions and illustrative heads: (1) No Province or district or tahsil or village is bound to take up civil disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property. (2) Non-violence must be observed in thought, word and deed in the face of the gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor, but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification. (3) Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence. (4) It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance; therefore, there should be no hired volunteers, but their bare maintenance and mainte-

nance of the dependents of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations. (5) Boycott of all foreign cloth whether British or of other countries is obligatory under all circumstances. (6) All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in indigenous mills. (7) Picketing of liquor shops and foreign-cloth shops should be vigorously conducted chiefly by women but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence. (8) Unlicensed manufacture and collection of salt should be resumed. (9) If processions and demonstrations are organized, only those should join them who will stand lathi charges or bullets without moving from their respective places. (10) Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressor is perfectly lawful inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore, boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted. (11) Civil breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to the people wherever it is considered possible and advisable may be practised. (12) All unjust orders issued under the Ordinances may be civilly disobeyed.

India in 1931-32, pp. 235-7

296. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

BOMBAY,
January 1, 1932

I THANK HIS EXCELLENCY FOR THE WIRE IN REPLY TO MINE OF 29TH INSTANT. IT GRIEVES ME. FOR HIS EXCELLENCY HAS REJECTED IN A MANNER HARDLY BEFITTING HIS HIGH POSITION AN ADVANCE MADE IN THE FRIENDLIEST SPIRIT. I HAD APPROACHED AS SEEKER WANTING LIGHT ON QUESTIONS IN WHICH I DESIRED TO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT VERSION OF VERY SERIOUS AND EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO WHICH I MADE REFERENCE. INSTEAD OF APPRECIATING MY ADVANCE HIS EXCELLENCY HAS REJECTED IT BY ASKING ME TO REPUDIATE MY VALUED COLLEAGUES IN ADVANCE AND TELLING ME

THAT EVEN IF I BECAME GUILTY OF SUCH DISHONOURABLE CONDUCT AND SOUGHT AN INTERVIEW I COULD NOT EVEN DISCUSS THESE MATTERS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION.

IN MY OPINION, CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE DWINDLES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE IN FACE OF ORDINANCES AND ACTS WHICH MUST, IF NOT MET WITH STUBBORN RESISTANCE, RESULT IN UTTER DEMORALIZATION OF NATION. I HOPE NO SELF-RESPECTING INDIAN WILL RUN RISK OF KILLING NATIONAL SPIRIT FOR A DOUBTFUL CONTINGENCY OF SECURING A CONSTITUTION TO WORK WHICH NO NATION WITH STAMINA MAY BE LEFT. LET ME ALSO POINT OUT THAT AS TO THE FRONTIER PROVINCE YOUR TELEGRAM CONTAINS A NARRATION OF FACTS WHICH, ON FACE OF THEM, FURNISH NO WARRANT FOR ARRESTS OF POPULAR LEADERS, PASSING OF EXTRA-LEGAL ORDINANCE, MAKING LIFE AND PROPERTY UTTERLY INSECURE AND SHOOTING UNARMED PEACEFUL CROWDS FOR DARING TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST ARRESTS OF THEIR TRUSTED LEADERS. IF KHAN SAHEB ABDUL GHAFFAR ASSERTED THE RIGHT OF COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE IT WAS A NATURAL CLAIM AND A CLAIM MADE WITH IMPUNITY BY THE CONGRESS AT LAHORE IN 1929 AND BY ME WITH ENERGY PUT BEFORE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN LONDON. MOREOVER, LET ME REMIND THE VICEROY THAT DESPITE THE KNOWLEDGE ON GOVERNMENT'S PART THAT CONGRESS MANDATE CONTAINED SUCH CLAIM, I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND LONDON CONFERENCE AS CONGRESS DELEGATE. NOR AM I ABLE TO DETECT IN A MERE REFUSAL TO ATTEND DURBAR AN OFFENCE WARRANTING SUMMARY IMPRISONMENT. IF KHAN SAHEB WAS FOMENTING RACIAL HATRED IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY REGRETTABLE. I HAVE HIS OWN DECLARATIONS TO THE CONTRARY MADE TO ME. BUT ASSUMING THAT HE DID FOMENT RACIAL HATRED, HE WAS ENTITLED TO OPEN TRIAL, WHERE HE COULD HAVE DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST ACCUSATION. REGARDING THE UNITED PROVINCES, HIS EXCELLENCY IS SURELY MISINFORMED, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO NO-RENT CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS, BUT WHILST NEGOTIATIONS WERE PROCEEDING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS REPRESEN-

TATIVES THE TIME FOR COLLECTION OF RENTS ACTUALLY ARRIVED AND RENTS BEGAN TO BE DEMANDED. CONGRESSMEN WERE THEREFORE OBLIGED TO ADVISE TENANTS TO SUSPEND PAYMENT PENDING THE RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS AND MR. SHERWANI HAD OFFERED ON BEHALF OF THE CONGRESS TO WITHDRAW THIS ADVICE IF THE AUTHORITIES SUSPENDED COLLECTIONS PENDING NEGOTIATIONS. I VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT THIS IS NOT A MATTER WHICH CAN BE SO SUMMARILY DISMISSED AS YOUR WIRE HAS DONE. CONTROVERSY IN THE UNITED PROVINCES IS OF A LONG STANDING AND INVOLVES WELL-BEING OF MILLIONS OF PEASANTRY KNOWN TO BE ECONOMICALLY GROUND DOWN. ANY GOVERNMENT JEALOUS OF THE WELFARE OF THE MASSES IN ITS CHARGE WOULD WELCOME VOLUNTARY CO-OPERATION OF A BODY LIKE THE CONGRESS WHICH ADMITTEDLY EXERCISES GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE MASSES AND WHOSE ONE AMBITION IS TO SERVE THEM FAITHFULLY. AND LET ME ADD THAT I REGARD THE WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENT OF TAXES AS AN INALIENABLE ANCIENT AND NATURAL RIGHT OF A PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL OTHER MEANS OF SEEKING FREEDOM FROM AN UN-BEARABLE ECONOMIC BURDEN. I MUST REPUDIATE SUGGESTION THAT THE CONGRESS HAS SLIGHTEST DESIRE TO PROMOTE DISORDER IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM. AS TO BENGAL, THE CONGRESS IS AT ONE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN CONDEMNING ASSASSINATIONS AND SHOULD HEARTILY CO-OPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN MEASURES THAT MAY BE FOUND NECESSARY TO STAMP OUT SUCH CRIMES. BUT WHILST THE CONGRESS WOULD CONDEMN IN UNMEASURED TERMS THE METHODS OF TERRORISM IT CAN IN NO WAY ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH GOVERNMENT TER-RORISM AS IS BETRAYED BY THE BENGAL ORDI-NANCE AND ACTS DONE THEREUNDER, BUT MUST RESIST WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ITS PRESCRIBED CREED OF NON-VIOLENCE SUCH MEASURES OF LEGALIZED GOV-ERNMENT TERRORISM. I HEARTILY ASSENT TO THE PROPOSITION LAID DOWN IN YOUR TELEGRAM THAT CO-OPERATION MUST BE MUTUAL BUT YOUR TELEGRAM LEADS ME IRRESISTIBLY TO THE CONCLUSION THAT

HIS EXCELLENCY DEMANDS CO-OPERATION FROM THE CONGRESS WITHOUT RETURNING ANY ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT. I CAN READ IN NO OTHER WAY HIS PEREMPTORY REFUSAL TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WHICH, AS I HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO SHOW, HAVE AT LEAST TWO SIDES. POPULAR SIDE I HAVE PUT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, BUT BEFORE COMMITTING MYSELF TO DEFINITE JUDGMENT, I WAS ANXIOUS TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER SIDE, THAT IS, THE GOVERNMENT SIDE, AND THEN TENDER MY ADVICE TO THE CONGRESS. WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR TELEGRAM I MAY NOT REPUDIATE MORAL LIABILITY FOR THE ACTIONS OF MY COLLEAGUES, WHETHER IN THE FRONTIER PROVINCE OR IN THE UNITED PROVINCES, BUT I CONFESS THAT I WAS IGNORANT OF THE DETAILED ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF MY COLLEAGUES WHILST I WAS ABSENT FROM INDIA, AND IT WAS BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ME TO ADVISE AND GUIDE THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS AND IN ORDER TO COMPLETE MY KNOWLEDGE, I SOUGHT WITH AN OPEN MIND AND WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS EXCELLENCY AND DELIBERATELY ASKED FOR HIS GUIDANCE. I CANNOT CONCEAL FROM HIS EXCELLENCY MY OPINION THAT THE REPLY HE HAS CONDESCENDED TO SEND WAS HARDLY A RETURN FOR MY FRIENDLY AND WELL-MEANT APPROACH, AND IF IT IS NOT YET TOO LATE, I WOULD ASK HIS EXCELLENCY TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISION AND SEE ME AS A FRIEND WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY CONDITIONS WHATSOEVER AS TO THE SCOPE OR SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION, AND I, ON MY PART, CAN PROMISE THAT I WOULD STUDY WITH AN OPEN MIND ALL THE FACTS THAT HE MIGHT PUT BEFORE ME. I WOULD UNHESITATINGLY AND WILLINGLY GO TO THE RESPECTIVE PROVINCES AND WITH THE AID OF THE AUTHORITIES STUDY BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION AND IF I CAME TO THE CONCLUSION AFTER SUCH A STUDY THAT THE PEOPLE WERE IN THE WRONG AND THAT THE WORKING COMMITTEE INCLUDING MYSELF WERE MISLED AS TO THE CORRECT POSITION, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS RIGHT,

I SHOULD HAVE NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER IN MAKING THAT OPEN CONFESSION AND GUIDING THE CONGRESS ACCORDINGLY. ALONG WITH MY DESIRE AND WILLINGNESS TO CO-OPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT I MUST PLACE MY LIMITATIONS BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY. NON-VIOLENCE IS MY ABSOLUTE CREED. I BELIEVE THAT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS NOT ONLY THE NATURAL RIGHT OF PEOPLE ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE NO EFFECTIVE VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT IT ALSO IS AN EFFECTIVE SUBSTITUTE FOR VIOLENCE OR ARMED REBELLION. I CAN NEVER, THEREFORE, DENY MY CREED. IN PURSUANCE THEREOF AND ON THE STRENGTH OF UNCONTRADICTED REPORTS SUPPORTED BY RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE MAY BE NO OTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO GUIDE THE PUBLIC, THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAS ACCEPTED MY ADVICE AND PASSED A RESOLUTION TENTATIVELY SKETCHING A PLAN OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. I AM SENDING HEREWITH TEXT OF RESOLUTION. IF HIS EXCELLENCY THINKS IT WORTH WHILE TO SEE ME PENDING OUR DISCUSSION OPERATION OF THE RESOLUTION WILL BE SUSPENDED IN HOPE IT MAY RESULT IN THE RESOLUTION BEING FINALLY GIVEN UP. I ADMIT THAT CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HIS EXCELLENCY AND MYSELF IS OF SUCH GRAVE IMPORTANCE AS NOT TO BROOK DELAY IN PUBLICATION. I AM THEREFORE SENDING MY TELEGRAM, YOUR REPLY, THIS REJOINDER AND THE WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION FOR PUBLICATION.[1]

India in 1931-32; also *Young India*, 7-1-1932

[1] For the reply from the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, *vide* Appendix IV.

297. NOTE INTRODUCING EDMOND PRIVAT AND MADAME PRIVAT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN *January 1, 1932*

Mons. Privat and Madame Privat are friends of India living in Switzerland. They have purposely come to India to study the country and the modern movement. I expect all Congressmen who may come in contact with them to assist them and render to them whatever service it is possible to render to them.[1]

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8791

298. TELEGRAM TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

BOMBAY,
January 2, 1932

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

PROBABLY LEAVING TOMORROW NIGHT FOR AHMEDABAD PERHAPS BETTER YOU COME AHMEDABAD.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5922

299. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[January 2, 1932][2]

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

I was delighted to receive your letter. You have no cause to envy us poor folk outside. But we do envy you for getting all the glory and leaving the drudgery to the outsiders. But we are plotting vengeance. I hope you are allowed to get some newspapers. In all I am doing you are constantly before my mind's eye.

[1] In the source, this is followed by a Hindi version.

[2] The source has the date January 29, which is obviously an error. The original at the Nehru Memorial Museum bears the date January 2.

I saw Kamala the other day. She does need plenty of rest. I shall try to see her once more and insist upon her not leaving her room till she is thoroughly restored. I hope you will approve of the action taken regarding Dr. Mahmud[1]. I am sure that the promise to pay the assessment on Anand Bhawan should be paid [*sic*].

Love to you both.

BAPU

[PS.]

God and Government willing, I go to the Ashram tomorrow to return in two or three days.

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 104

300. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 2, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I get your letters of course, but, on my side, how can I find time to write to you? It is about 11.30 p.m. now. It is likely that I may be arrested tonight; even so I have sat down to write this letter. What advice shall I give you? I have the fullest confidence in you. God will give you the strength to meet any eventuality. Mirabehn will go there after I am arrested. You will have to guide her. If a request for her is received from any quarter, it will be for you to decide. Prabhavati, too, is likely to arrive there in a few days. Tell Lakshmi that I got her letter. I like her decision.

Convey my respects to Mother and Father. How happy I should be to see them! I remember to have told you to give away to the Vidyapith all the books in the Ashram, except those which may be useful in the school. Kaka told me that your impression was different. However that may be, I think it will be wise to give away the books to the Vidyapith.

I believe the journals and magazines will also be better used and preserved there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8198. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Dr. Syed Mahmud

301. TALK WITH WELFARE OF INDIA LEAGUE DEPUTATION[1]

[BOMBAY,]
January 2, 1932

My telegram[2] was in a studiously courteous language and in the friendliest tone. My friends objected to the word 'guidance', but I pleaded with them and got them to agree. You will see that the Viceroy has placed himself completely in the wrong. And arguing about the Ordinances was the wrong way of going about the thing. He forgot that I had not approached him as an ordinary citizen, but one who had constant dealings with him and one with whom he had to discuss the future plans as to how best to help in the R.T.C. work. It is irrelevant for him to say that I could not discuss the Ordinances. The second condition is insulting, viz., that I must repudiate my colleagues. The fact is that Government has overreached itself. It is not Lord Willingdon's language. It has been drafted for him. It is a terrible affair that Government of India should act in this light-hearted fashion though they know that any error may lead to a terrible situation arising in this country. If you are convinced that Government of India have committed a grave error in repelling my advances and in banging the door on my face, then you should move heaven and earth to compel the Government of India to reconsider their decision and see me as a friend without putting any conditions. But why should I have got the Working Committee to pass a tentative resolution, you will ask. Is it not that you want to go with a loaded pistol? No, because the Government of India knew that the Congress was an institution with civil disobedience for its creed. The Congress had done enough to lead the country and Government to believe that in connection with a movement for redress of wrongs the Congress would not advise an armed rebellion but a non-violent disobedience. Evidently they overlook the fact that civil disobedience had become a permissible thing. In the Delhi Pact, civil disobedience was not given up, it was only discontinued during the Truce. In Simla, when

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article: "The Historic Week"
[2] *Vide* "Telegram to Viceroy", p. 459.

our final letters were exchanged—letters which were published as part of the Second Settlement—I said in my letter that, if all steps fail, we reserve to ourselves the right of civil disobedience.[1] Government's reply finally banging the door is thus a direct breach of the Delhi Pact and of the Simla Pact to which Lord Willingdon was party. You have thus got to see the enormity of the error in which the Government of India have been betrayed. I therefore suggest to you that you follow your telegram by further action and go over to the side of the Congress if a simple thing like an interview cannot be granted.

It grieves me to find the suggestion being made that I was overborne by my extremist colleagues. I am the arch-extremist. I have not found colleagues who have given more loyal allegiance than has been given me during the last four days. There has been no goading on the part of my colleagues, and all resolutions and telegrams have been drafted by me. They have accepted me as an expert in these matters and left the whole field open to me. We discussed for a long time and the sense was that we may pass the tentative resolution, but not publish it. It was I who said "No". If I suppressed it, I would be unfair to the Viceroy and the nation. Having passed the resolution, I said the Viceroy must be placed in possession of the full facts. They agreed. My colleagues are not wedded to civil disobedience nor to non-violence in the sense that I am. It is not a be-all and end-all with them as with me. But there was no course open to me. A man to whom it is open to declare an armed rebellion may parley, but a man who has no such alternative—how can he parley? That is what has happened, for civil disobedience is my creed, how can I give it up? That is why, though I am miserly in expending national money, I paid for the full text of the resolution being telegraphed along with my reply.

The way to follow out your telegram is not to send me to the Viceroy but to see the Viceroy yourselves. All you have got to tell him is that when you are about to embark on a big constitutional advance it should be absurd for the head of a State to refuse to see a public man.[2]

Young India, 7-1-1932

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVII.

[2] The Deputation after hearing Gandhiji authorized their president to send another telegram assuring the Viceroy that Gandhiji had an entirely open mind and that it was all the more necessary that he should have an opportunity of fully discussing the situation with His Excellency.

302. MESSAGE TO KAIRA FARMERS[1]

AHMEDABAD,
[Before *January 3, 1932*]

I had a great longing to peep into Gujarat to see the Ashramites and other companions and to console and sympathize with you in your difficulties, but I am afraid that this will not be possible.

A satyagrahi cannot even dream of a family or friend nor could he afford to wait to see them or bid farewell when the jail or the like invites him. I believe such is my present condition. If, therefore, it is not possible to see you, believe me it was due to the imperative demand of duty. It seems war stares us in the face, and it would be more grim this time.

Exhorting them to bear the brunt of the fight and not to flinch, Gandhiji asks them to cheerfully sacrifice their lands, goods and cattle and to suffer all sorts of privations and to bear all oppressions, including lathi and bullets. But while enduring all these, Gandhiji appeals to them not to be excited in the least and to pity their persecutor and wish him well.

Quoting the famous Gujarati poet Kavi Shamal Bhatt, that "he who returns good for evil has only truly lived", Gandhiji goes on:

You have drunk at this fountain of love, and perceived the experiences of others. You must therefore see that you do not offend even the farmer who does not stand by you or who is hostile to you. Pity him too, for it is not his fault that he does not see eye to eye with you in matters of duty.

Gandhi says that they conferred upon Mr. Vallabhbhai the title of Sardar and continues:

In your hands lies his honour and his strength. Not only this, but the reputation and honour of the whole of India lies in your hands. On the resumption of the struggle, the eyes of India and of the whole world are concentrated upon you. Remember all these, and pray for strength befitting a satyagrahi.

Asking the peasants to live harmoniously with their Dharala brethren, Gandhiji concludes:

Remember this, and console yourself. Rest assured that all your confiscated lands will be restored to you. This is not a bait.

[1] According to the source the message was in Gujarati.

Believe every word of it, when I say that this only is the true foundation of a satyagrahi.

The Hindu, 4-1-1932

303. TEMPLE-ENTRY SATYAGRAHA

[On or before *January 3, 1932*][1]

Whilst the Working Committee was in session during the last week I had several conversations with representatives from Kerala and other Congress workers about many questions arising in connection with Temple-entry Satyagraha. Instead of correcting the report produced by the interviewers in the form of questions and answers, I am giving below what I think should be the answer to their questions. The answers will be found so framed as to render unnecessary the questions being stated.

1. It is necessary to bear in mind that the question of removal of untouchability, though it has a political significance of the greatest importance, is essentially and predominantly a religious question to be solved by the Hindus and as such for them it overshadows even the political aspect. That is to say, the duty of touchables in respect of removal of untouchability can never be subordinated to any political exigencies, hence the present political situation must not in any way be allowed to postpone the endeavour to end untouchability.

2. In a religious and righteous cause the reformer has to face all consequences and even take the risk of temporary alienation of the sympathy of privileged classes. Those, therefore, who believe untouchability is a curse to be removed at all costs will not abate their effort for fear of finding themselves in a hopeless minority.

3. If the present *pujaris*[2] of temples strike work and refuse to perform the ceremonial required, they should be replaced promptly and, if the particular caste which has supplied the *pujaris* fail to furnish a substitute, I would not hesitate to find the priest from any other caste so long as he has the requisite qualifications and conviction. The fact is that, so far as I am aware, the majority of the existing *pujaris* are too dependent on this service for their maintenance to continue the strike for any length of time. That

[1] According to the source this article was dictated by Gandhiji under very heavy pressure of work in hourly expectation of arrest and handed over for publication just before his arrest on January 4.

[2] Priests

the right of performing *puja* is hereditary does not affect my opinion because, if the possessor himself of such a right, for any cause whatsoever, refuses to exercise the right, he has only himself to thank.

4. If temple authorities offer to set apart a corner for untouchables, it should not be considered as sufficient. No restriction against untouchables which is not applicable to other non-Brahmin Hindus can be tolerated. But a distant corner may be set apart for those who do not want to mix with the untouchables. These people then become untouchables by choice.

5. We may not force open barricades. That would be a species of violence and it will not do to say that barricades are inanimate things, for the hands that put up the barricades were animate.

6. From the foregoing it will be clear that belief in temples should be a condition precedent to offering satyagraha regarding temple-entry. Temple-entry is a religious right. Entry, therefore, by any other person cannot be called satyagraha. At the time of Vaikom Satyagraha, when Mr. George Joseph went to jail, I sent him word that he was wrong.[1] He agreed with me, promptly apologized, and came out of jail. Temple-entry satyagraha is a penance on the part of the touchable Hindu. He is the sinner and he has, therefore, to do the penance by inviting punishment on himself for endeavouring to take these untouchable co-religionists with him to the temple. Therefore, non-Hindus can only offer help other than satyagraha. For instance, whilst the other communities helped the Sikhs at the time of Gurudwara movement in various ways, satyagraha was and could be offered only by the Sikhs who believed in the *akhanda path*[2].

In my opinion, untouchables should not alone offer satyagraha. It should be led by touchable reformers. This is a matter of expedience. There may come a time when untouchables may offer satyagraha by themselves. The idea behind the opinion here expressed is that public opinion amongst touchable Hindus should be sufficiently alive and active before satyagraha is taken up at all. It is a weapon whose use depends for success upon the gathering of public opinion. Therefore, its use is invariably preceded by all the known orthodox remedies.

7. There can be no entry demanded in temples on private *bona-fide* property. When a man allows free use to the public of a temple erected on a private property, but bars the entry of untouchables alone, it ceases to be a private temple.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 391.

[2] Non-stop reading of the *Granth Saheb*

8. It has been suggested that temple-entry through satyagraha should be postponed altogether and effected by legislative enactment. I wholly dissent from the view. Legislative enactment as a rule, and certainly always under democracy, follows the formation of public opinion, and for the formation of public opinion, I know no swifter remedy than real satyagraha properly handled. The question as to when time is ripe for offering satyagraha in a particular place is one primarily for local Congress Committees to decide.

9. Those who contend that non-Hindus can vote on questions arising out of untouchability I would refer to the first resolution, since the new constitution passed at Nagpur in 1920. There it is clearly stated that the question of removal of untouchability is one specially and exclusively reserved for Hindus. Therefore, a convention has grown up that non-Hindus should not interfere by their votes or otherwise with this religious question.

Young India, 14-1-1932

304. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

THANKS YOUR WIRE EVEN DATE.[1] I CANNOT HELP EXPRESSING DEEP REGRET FOR DECISION OF HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT. SURELY IT IS WRONG TO DESCRIBE HONEST EXPRESSION OF OPINION AS THREAT. MAY I REMIND GOVERNMENT THAT DELHI NEGOTIATIONS WERE OPENED AND CARRIED ON WHILST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS ON AND THAT WHEN PACT WAS MADE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS NOT GIVEN UP BUT ONLY DISCONTINUED. THIS POSITION WAS REASSERTED AND ACCEPTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN SIMLA IN SEPTEMBER LAST PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FOR LONDON. ALTHOUGH I HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES CONGRESS MIGHT HAVE TO RESUME CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE GOVERNMENT DID NOT BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS. THAT IT WAS MADE CLEAR BY GOVERNMENT THAT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CARRIED WITH IT PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE MERELY PROVES WHAT CIVIL RESISTERS BARGAIN FOR BUT

[1] Evidently Gandhiji started drafting this telegram on January 2.

DOES NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT MY ARGUMENT. HAD GOVERNMENT RESENTED ATTITUDE IT WAS OPEN TO THEM NOT TO SEND ME TO LONDON. ON THE CONTRARY MY DEPARTURE HAD HIS EXCELLENCY'S BLESSINGS. NOR IS IT FAIR OR CORRECT TO SUGGEST THAT I HAVE EVER ADVANCED THE CLAIM THAT ANY POLICY OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DEPENDENT ON MY JUDGMENT. BUT I DO SUBMIT THAT ANY POPULAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD ALWAYS WELCOME AND SYMPATHETICALLY CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS MADE BY PUBLIC BODIES AND THEIR RE-PRESENTATIVES AND ASSIST THEM WITH ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR ACTS OR ORDINANCES OF WHICH PUBLIC OPINION MAY DISAPPROVE. I CLAIM THAT MY MESSAGES HAVE NO OTHER MEANING THAN WHAT IS SUGGESTED IN LAST PARAGRAPH. TIME ALONE WILL SHOW WHOSE POSITION WAS JUSTIFIED. MEANWHILE I WISH TO ASSURE GOVERNMENT THAT EVERY ENDEAVOUR WILL BE MADE ON PART OF CONGRESS TO CARRY ON STRUGGLE WITHOUT MALICE AND IN STRICTLY NON-VIOLENT MANNER. IT WAS HARDLY NECESSARY TO REMIND ME THAT CONGRESS AND I, ITS HUMBLE REPRESENTATIVE, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS.

India in 1931-32; also *Young India*, 7-1-1932

305. CABLE TO J. F. HORRABIN

[January 3, 1932]

DEEPLY GRATEFUL YOUR CABLE. SENT FULL CABLE ADDRESSED TOM WILLIAMS. RECEIVED MIDNIGHT [REPLY] FROM GOVERNMENT FINALLY CLOSING THE DOOR UPON THE REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW AND ALL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GROUND THAT CONGRESS HAD DARED TO THREATEN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ON FAILURE TO SECURE RELIEF. THE VICEROY'S REPLY FURTHER ACCUSES ME OF WANTING TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS UNDER THE MENACE OF UNLAWFUL ACTION. IN THE SURROUNDING ATMOSPHERE I DETECT NO TRACE OF DESIRE FOR AN HONOURABLE AND EQUAL CO-OPERATION. VICEROY HAS FORGOTTEN THAT IN THE DELHI TRUCE THE RIGHT OF CITIZEN TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS

TACITLY RECOGNIZED; FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS CONTINUING WHILST THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE PENDING, AND IT WAS DISCONTINUED ONLY DURING TRUCE. AGAIN AT SIMLA THE PRESENT VICEROY ALLOWED UNCHALLENGED MY STATEMENT THAT CONGRESS RESERVED THE RIGHT TO OFFER CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IF OTHER METHODS OF GETTING REDRESS FAILED, NO DOUBT SUBJECT TO PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE, WHICH IS INHERENT IN THE METHOD OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, BUT BECAUSE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS CONTEMPLATED UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES VICEROY NOT ONLY DID NOT BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT COMPLETED THEM AND SENT ME TO LONDON WITH HIS BLESSINGS. THE PRESENT ATTITUDE, THEREFORE, IS A CLEAR DEPARTURE FROM THE ATTITUDE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. THE FACT IS THAT GOVERNMENT CANNOT TOLERATE THE RISING POWER OF CONGRESS, AND THE CONSEQUENT RISE OF THE PEOPLE'S SPIRIT. THE INTOLERANCE OF DISSENTING PUBLIC OPINION AND ITS GROWING INSISTENCE CONTINUES UNABATED. I AM CONVINCED THAT IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FREE CONSTITUTION LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE. THE SUPPRESSION OF CONGRESS ORGANIZATION AND THE ARRESTS OF LEADERS SEEM IMMINENT. NEVERTHELESS, SO FAR AS I CAN JUDGE, VAST MASSES OF PEOPLE WILL NOT BE DISSPIRITED, WILL OFFER STUBBORN RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY, AND YET IN THE MIDST OF GOVERNMENT PROVOCATION, WILL OBSERVE STRICT NON-VIOLENCE. IN SPITE OF TERRIBLE HANDICAP, I HOPE TO SUPPLY YOU WITH REGULAR "BULLETIN" BY WIRE, IF THE AUTHORITIES DON'T PROHIBIT DESPATCH OF SIMPLE VERSION OF FACTS. PLEASE ALWAYS SHARE NEWS WITH MR. ALEXANDER AND OTHER FRIENDS.

GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

306. CABLE TO LORD IRWIN

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

PRAY BELIEVE ME I HAVE TRIED MY BEST, BUT HAVE FAILED. NEVERTHELESS, I DON'T LOSE HOPE, AND GOD WILLING, SHALL RETAIN THE SPIRIT WHICH YOU BELIEVED ACTUATED ME DURING THAT SACRED WEEK IN DELHI. I SHALL NOT BELIE YOUR CERTIFICATE.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-1-1932

307. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA[1]

January 3, 1932

It is a matter for deep regret to me to have received this telegram from H.E. the Viceroy and the Government. I cannot help saying that it has heaped error upon error, instead of courageously acknowledging the first error, in practically banging the door in my face by imposing for the coveted interview conditions which no self-respecting man can possibly accept and reopen the door. The telegram has added another error by deliberately and finally shutting the door by telling me that he cannot see me under threat of resumption of civil disobedience and introducing in the telegram an argument that is not germane to my repeated request for an interview. The Viceroy and his Government have committed a flagrant breach of the Delhi Pact by using the so-called threat of resumption of civil disobedience as an excuse for refusing to see me.

Surely he must know that the negotiations which resulted in the Settlement were being carried on although civil disobedience was still on, and under the Settlement it was never finally given up, but was only discontinued for the purpose of securing representation of the Congress at the Round Table Conference, it being understood that it was likely to be resumed if the Round Table Conference failed to do satisfaction in respect of the national demand. To this I wish to add the Second Settlement that was arrived

[1] The message was dictated to the A.P.I. reporter on telephone at about 2 a.m.

at in Simla immediately prior to my departure for London.[1] On examining the correspondence that has passed between myself and the Government, it would be seen that notwithstanding the Truce I had reserved to myself the right to take up civil disobedience by way of defensive action in connection with the grievances about which relief might be unattainable through milder methods. Surely if civil disobedience was such a heinous crime, the Government could never have exchanged correspondence on that basis and sent me to London with Viceregal blessings; but I see that with the change of times manners have also changed.

The nation must now respond to the challenge of the Government. It is to be hoped, however, that whilst people belonging to all classes and creeds will courageously and in all humility go through the fiery ordeal considering no price too dear and no sufferings too great, they will observe the strictest non-violence in thought, word and deed, no matter how great the provocation may be. I would also urge them not to be angry with the administrators. It is not easy for them to shed the habit handed down from generation to generation. Our quarrel is not with men but with measures.

We have faith in ourselves and, therefore, in human nature, to feel that, if we suffer long enough and in the proper spirit, our sufferings must result in converting administrators. After all, let us realize that the greater and the longer the sufferings the greater would be our fitness for swaraj, for which we are embarking upon a fiery ordeal. I would remind the nation of the pledge I gave to the Prime Minister towards the end of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference that there should be no malice in the struggle if it fell to our lot to resume it and that we would do nothing unworthy. I shall trust every Indian to redeem the pledge.

To Englishmen I would say that they must beware of false reports that are often dished up for them from morning to morning and evening to evening as to the doings of the Congress in India. This feeding on false information or starvation due to suppression of correct information is a greater barrier to heart-to-heart co-operation.

The Hindu, 3-1-1932

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVII.

308. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE[1]

LABURNUM ROAD,
BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

DEAR GURUDEV,

I am just stretching my tired limbs on the mattress and as I try to steal a wink of sleep I think of you. I want you to give your best to the sacrificial fire that is being lighted.

With love,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 4632

309. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

[BOMBAY,]
January 3, 1932

You have been my companions in these prayers for some days, and now that the struggle is resumed again and I may be taken away any moment, I hope you will continue to have your prayers regularly morning and evening. Let it become a daily obligatory ritual for you. Prayer plays a large part in a self-purificatory sacrifice and you will see that it will be a veritable cow of plenty for you, and will make your way clear. The more you apply yourselves to it, the more fearlessness you will experience in daily life, for fearlessness is a sign and symbol of self-purification. I do not know a man or a woman who was on the path of self-purification and was still obsessed by fear. Generally there are two kinds of fear in man's minds—fear of death and fear of loss of material possessions. A man of prayer and self-purification will shed the fear of death and embrace death as a boon companion and will regard all earthly possessions as fleeting and of no account. He

[1] This was dictated to Mahadev Desai on January 3 at 4 a.m. and signed the next day, "a few moments after his actual arrest", according to a covering letter Mahadev Desai sent along with it.

[2] Held at 4 a.m.

will see that he has no right to possess wealth when misery and pauperism stalk the land and when there are millions who have to go without a meal. No power on earth can subdue a man who has shed these two fears. But for that purpose the prayer should be a thing of the heart and not a thing of outward demonstration. It must take us daily nearer to God, and a prayerful man is sure to have his heart's desire fulfilled, for the simple reason that he will never have an improper desire. Continue this ritual and you will shed lustre not only on your city but on our country. I hope this brief prayer of mine will find a lodgment in your hearts.

Young India, 7-1-1932

310. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

What I would ask the nation to do after my arrest, is to wake up from its sleep; and

1. to discard at once all foreign cloth and take to khaddar;
2. to discard all drugs, narcotics, and intoxicating drinks;
3. to discard every trace of violence and give absolute protection to every Englishman, woman or child whether official or otherwise, no matter how provocative the action of officials may be;
4. to withdraw from Government every form of co-operation that is possible for every individual; and
5. to study the resolution of the Working Committee and carry it out to the letter and in the spirit and in that process suffer all hardships that they may be put to, including loss of life and property.

It is difficult to lay down one rule for the whole of India. But it seems to me that, since the Congress has adopted the method of self-purification through non-violence, I should begin by hartal, that is, voluntary suspension of all works for profit and undergo a prayerful fast and then begin simultaneously civil disobedience in such manner as may be possible in each locality such as

(a) unlicensed manufacture of salt,

(b) picketing of liquor and foreign-cloth shops,

(c) breach of orders under Section 144 and the like when there is no likelihood of breach of peace and where orders have been issued not out of any legal necessity, but manifestly for the

sake of crushing the spirit of the people or, what is the same thing, of suppressing the Congress.

As to what particular items of programme Bombay should follow he left to Mr. K. F. Nariman and his council.

Questioned if the work of carrying on the behests of the Congress would not prove difficult if, as already contemplated, all listed Congress workers were removed from the field of action, Gandhiji commented:

The resolution of the Working Committee was framed to cover the difficulty raised. The situation will develop so suddenly that it is not possible to be more definite than the resolution is. After experience of nearly 12 years of satyagraha in a more or less acute form, individuals are expected to know what the change in circumstances will require. Last year's experience shows that in spite of the imprisonment of almost all the leaders, the nation showed marvellous resourcefulness in the emergency as it arose, and kept up the spirit of civil defiance.

When his attention was drawn to the possibility of opposition to the Congress from certain classes of Indians, the Mahatma said that some handicap there naturally must be whenever there is internal opposition, but added:

All these difficulties will dissolve in the fire of suffering without hatred whether towards the administrators or towards our own people, whether they oppose or are indifferent to the movement.

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

311. MESSAGE TO INDIAN CHRISTIANS[1]

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,

I have full trust that in the struggle on which the country is about to embark, Indian Christians, who tender their loyalty to the one whom they call the Prince of Peace, will not be found behind any community in our country in the struggle which is essentially based on peace. I venture to suggest that service in this national struggle is an infinitely greater safeguard for the protection of a minority that has tendered such service than any paper security.

I would like to lay stress upon khaddar and prohibition. When in my wanderings I have met thousands of poor Christian

[1] The message was given through the Secretary, Nationalist Christian Party.

fellow-countrymen, I have realized the necessity for them of khaddar as much as for others. I hope, therefore, that every Christian's home will be adorned by the installation of the spinning-wheel and every Christian body with khaddar, spun and woven by the hands of our poor countrymen and countrywomen.

And then there is the curse of drink. I have never understood how a Christian can take intoxicating drink. Did not Jesus say to Satan when he went to seduce him: "Get thee behind me, Satan?" Is not intoxicating drink Satan incarnate? How can a Christian serve both Satan and Christ?

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

312. MESSAGE TO AMERICA[1]

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

On the eve of embarking on what promises to be a deadly struggle, I would expect numerous American friends to watch its career and use the influence of the great nation for the sake of oppressed humanity. This Indian struggle is more than national. It has international value and importance. I am convinced that if my countrymen and women retain up to the last the spirit of non-violence, they will have inaugurated a new era upon earth.

The Hindu, 3-1-1932

313. DIARY, 1932

BOMBAY, JANUARY 1, FRIDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Spent the day at the Working Committee. Cloth and bullion merchants as also Bhulabhai and others called. Benthall called at night.

BOMBAY, JANUARY 2, SATURDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Met Modi, [members of] the Welfare League,[2] Sir Ness Wadia. Went to see Venilal. Meherbaba called. Viceroy's reply came.

[1] The message was given through Mills, an American Press correspondent.

[2] *Vide* pp. 479-80.

BOMBAY, JANUARY 3, SUNDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Sir Phi[roze] Sethna, Cowasji Jehangir and others called. Members of the Chamber met me. Had a talk with them. Cancelled at their instance my departure for Ahmedabad.[1]

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 19337

[1] The "Diary" continues in the succeeding volumes, up to January 1, 1933, the portion relating to the period covered in a volume being given at the end of that volume.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ACCOUNT OF MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF COTTON TRADE[1]

EDGEWORTH,
September 27, 1931

T. D. BARLOW: The discussions were frank and friendly on both sides. Mr. Gandhi's main point was that 90 per cent of the population of India was dependent on agriculture, and had no work during six months of the year. The khaddar movement therefore has great social significance. Mr. Gandhi has chosen homespinning because it does not involve heavy capital expenditure, and can be widely spread.

Mr. Gandhi, I presume, would accept any alternative craft that would provide what he is seeking to achieve, the enlargement and betterment of peasant life, but so far he has not been able to find any effective substitute or competitor. It is therefore impossible for him to abandon the homespinning movement.

Mr. Gandhi denied that this movement was specifically directed against English cloth, and said it was firmly understood that when the Pact with Lord Irwin was signed on March 5 the economic boycott remained. He further maintained that it was the economic condition of the world, and above all the lowness of commodity prices, which was responsible for the poor demand for goods far more than the boycott. Mr. Gandhi also said that if what he considered proper and the necessary arrangements between Great Britain and India were established, he fully believed it would be possible to make arrangements whereby a considerable quantity of English cloth would be imported to India, but he could hold out no hope that the Lancashire trade could regain its former magnitude.

Mr. Gandhi said that 100,000 women spinners and 10,000 men weavers were active on the homespinning movement and the villages showed marked signs of economic improvement. He said that the British-owned mills were on the whole better than indigenous mills, but that some of the latter were as good or better than anything in the world. He expressed himself as astonished at the comfort and housing of Lancashire work-people as he had seen it. I hope the frank and courteous atmosphere that prevailed in the discussion will provide a favourable atmosphere for official conversations. If satisfactory

[1] *Vide* pp. 66-7.

arrangement is made at the Round Table Conference it should be much easier to devise something to minimize to the greatest degree the hardship of Lancashire.

JOHN GREY: Mr. Gandhi gave us at some length his economic policy, which is directed to the regeneration of village life in India, and stressed the urgent necessity of finding the villagers some alternative to six months' idleness which would at the same time be remunerative. It is not as an industry that he regards khaddar as being important, but primarily as an opportunity for work and to supplement earnings. But he realizes that for a long time India will not be self-sufficing and will need foreign cloth, and he assured us that if India gets that measure of independence that he is seeking for her he is prepared to do all he can to promote the co-operation of India and Great Britain as two friendly States, and would go a long way toward granting us some kind of preference.

There is one fear uppermost in my mind, and I ventured very respectfully to submit it to Mr. Gandhi. He has united all sorts and kinds of people, different classes, different races, different creeds, under him in a crusade of independence. But supposing that object to be attained, will his power be anything like so great as it is now? I think independence is the cement that is binding his followers together, and I think the cement might come unstuck. Mr. Gandhi does not, I suggest, appreciate fully the power underlying mechanical industry or the singleness of purpose there is about commercial rapacity. His answer was that the villages, once granted universal suffrage, would vote as units, and could govern and control the commercial elements. But I think he was troubled by this question. While he was having his tea of fruit and vegetables, after the meeting was over, I had another talk with him, and we got on to the question of poverty.

He spoke of the villages full of 'emasculated skeletons', and I agreed that there could be no outward comparison between poverty in India and poverty in Lancashire. But I said, it is a question of degree. Poverty can be just as real here in its pain and its burden, as it is in India. It all depends on what one was accustomed to. I told him that the poverty went much deeper than he could see in a superficial visit, and that there was in Darwen, Black-burn, and Great Harwood especially a concentrated dark blot of unemployment and misery which was directly attributable to the lack of Indian demand.

Mr. Gandhi quoted figures and facts to prove, and he did it effectively, that the poverty is due to world causes as well as to the Indian boycott, but I replied that the effect of the Indian boycott was worse both in itself and its repercussions because it was concentrated intensively in one industrial area, rather than throughout the industry as a whole. Mr. Gandhi appreciated this point, and his attitude was a very sympathetic one. I am sure he is a humane man, but his humanity is first and foremost for the Indian people. He repudiates the idea that he is a politician seeking power, and his repudiation impressed us.

His appearance as he sat like a Chinese ivory of Buddha awaiting our entrance was pleasing and impressive. He has a well-shaped head, which is not bald, as his pictures seem to show, but covered with close-cropped grey hair. His expression and manner are attractive.

JOHN LEE: We never anticipated that our meeting with Mr. Gandhi would give us any immediate hope. We did not expect that he would tell us he was willing to lift the boycott or give us a preference over Indian mills, but we still thought he might give some assurance for the future if the Round Table Conference should be a success. That, in a measure, he did, but emphasized that we should still have to face the native khaddar and a preference to Indian mills so long as the khaddar was not complete. He was at pains to assure us that the boycott was purely an economic and not a political one. But, frankly, we feel that the line that can be drawn between the one and the other, between political and economic, is a very fine one. One question which was put to him was: "What influence can Congress use, and what has it done already, in the interests of the natives in the mills, with regard to their working conditions and their wages?" He told us in reply of improvements which had already been effected, and assured us that Congress would continue in its work of amelioration. We all felt that from the idealistic point of view we could not quarrel with Mr. Gandhi. I myself said to one of my colleagues, "If I were an Indian, I should be a disciple of Gandhi."

Of course, in so far as he wants to get back to crude methods of production, either in agriculture or in yarn, we are puzzled. Mr. Gandhi himself was spinning while we were there. He told us he always does an hour a day. But even though his machine is an improvement on the old hand-spinning wheel it is still very slow and very crude. We welcomed his assurance that he would be willing to see a preference on Lancashire goods if all his aspirations of independence are fulfilled, and noted that this applied not only to Lancashire but to British goods as a whole. He specifically mentioned other classes of goods. There is perhaps one direction in which one may be justified in some optimism. Perhaps when the education which Mr. Gandhi desires has come to the villages he will not be satisfied with his crude way of providing clothes for himself and will want to turn his energies elsewhere. So that in the development of the Indian villager there might lie hope for us.

ANDREW NAESMITH: Whatever people think of Gandhi and his policy one thing is obvious. He possesses personality and magnetism. It is astounding to reflect that an individual with such a frail body and no imposing physique can yet command the loyalty, affection, and love of millions of people residing in the villages of India. The thing that struck me most was the sober statement of fact which he recounted to us of the conditions in the villages out there, the social life of India, and his own relationship to it.

He spoke without gesture and in well-modulated tones. The only feeling he displayed was in the inflection of the voice. I got the impression that this man

really believes he is the chosen vessel of God to lift the wide standard of life in India by the policies he is enunciating of non-violence, truth, and love. He was frank enough to say in our protracted conversations that he recognized to the full the fearful consequences of his policy and that of the Congress Party on the industrial and economic life of Lancashire. However, when he contrasts the social conditions of our people with those of his he still believes it is his divine mission to proceed with his task. I do not think that Gandhi will vary his purposes because of what he has seen in Lancashire and learnt from us. And so I cannot see any possible hope of Lancashire's ever doing the same amount of trade with India in textile goods.

If his economic policy and political principles are sound and are eventually realized, it seems to me that fully 40 per cent of the spindles and looms in Lancashire will never run again. One has considerable sympathy with the salvation of village life in India. At the same time, when one realizes all that it means to Lancashire one is filled with apprehension for the future. Suppose, we said, there is a conflict in the future between the hand-weavers and the Bombay mills. Quite quietly, without bombast, he replied, 'I can break the Bombay mills, if need be', and we knew from his tones he believed he could.

F. HINDLE: I had met Mr. Gandhi before, in 1926, when I went to India with Mr. Tom Shaw and others in the Trade Delegation. Mr. Gandhi was very candid on Saturday, but, despite the fact that he was meeting with British business men who had felt the effects of his policy very keenly and were determined to put their point of view, there was no bitterness, and the interview was a pleasant one. All the same, I think it has brought home to us the fact that we cannot hope for the same volume of trade with India again. I don't like saying that, but we must face facts sometimes. Do I think his visit has done good? Well, yes, it has brought enlightenment, but it is enlightenment without hope.

FRED MILLS: After meeting Mr. Gandhi I am convinced that he is very sincere, and that he means what he says when he denies that he has any animosity towards Lancashire. The boycott he declares to be purely an economic weapon and will persist even if his aspirations in respect of independence are conceded. I think it is very important that he sees no reason why a preference once the villages have produced to their fullest extent [*sic*].

The question of poverty is a difficult one. We put it to him that in the East a lower standard of life is the normal thing, and he agreed, but said that there were many millions in India who were below the lowest standard possible even in the Orient. There may be those who think Mr. Gandhi poses, but I am not one of them. He is one of the most remarkable men I have ever met, and disarms criticism by his very pleasing manner. He told us we liked, but the whole discussion was carried on in the greatest good temper. All our questions he answered very fully and with perfect good humour. He paid a high tribute to his reception from everyone in Lancashire, and said he was

surprised to find even the legitimate irritation towards himself which he had expected had not been shown.

T. ASHURST: I do not think we have progressed very much. Mr. Gandhi has made it clear that only if he is satisfied will he do anything to help us, and even that depends on his wants at home being satisfied. We found it was very difficult to separate the economic and political issues, more difficult than Mr. Gandhi seems to find it. The point arises whether Mr. Gandhi can control the mill-owners in his own country, and whether at some time in the future they will not be able to flood the villages with their machine-made cloth. Still, I think it was good thing for us to meet Mr. Gandhi, and we found him personally very likeable.

The Manchester Guardian, 28-9-1931

APPENDIX II

ROMAIN ROLLAND'S LETTER TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND[1]

December, 1931

How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days—from Sunday night until Friday afternoon, the eleventh—at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnoose, but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open, like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm around me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

Then came Mira (Miss Slade), proud of figure and with the stately bearing of a Demeter, and finally three Indians, one a young son of Gandhi, Devdas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle and but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries—disciples—two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind : Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber on the second floor where I sleep at Villa Olga—you will remember it—that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted with the assistance of Mira, and I had also a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some good photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux, recorded the aspect of our interviews.

Evening at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indians seated on the carpet, and a little assembly of the

[1] *Vide* pp. 395-8.

faithful grouped about, there was a suite of three beautiful chants—the first an extract from the *Gita*, the second an ancient hymn of the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi has translated and the third a canticle of Rama and Siva, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked—and they were not lacking at Geneva—giving them rude truths which left them silenced and suffocated.

The Roman bourgeoisie, and nationalist, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer the public meetings would have been forbidden. He pronounced himself as unequivocally as possible on the double question of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant evolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

He was asked at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how, among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word 'truth', as most truly defining the essential element. He had then said, "God is Truth." "But", he added, "two years ago I advanced another step. I now say, 'Truth is God.' For even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and, from their point of view, they are right." You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekananda.

And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. (He does not know Beethoven, but he knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me,[1] and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go.) I played him the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added "Les Champs Elysees" of Gluck—the page for the orchestra and the air for the flute.

[1] Mirabehn joined Mahatma Gandhi at the suggestion of Romain Rolland.

He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country, which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies, and he has worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, nor even life itself without hardship. "The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite."

Here, my dear friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken much more detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterers and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the telephone never ceased ringing, photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Leman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the "King of India" they intended to assume complete responsibility for his "victualling". We received letters from "Sons of God". Some Italian wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of the weekly national lottery!

My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten days' rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns tomorrow. For my part, I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail!

Bapu's Letters to Mira, pp. 180-3

APPENDIX III

TELEGRAM FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY[1]

December 31, 1931

HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELEGRAM OF THE 29TH INSTANT IN WHICH YOU REFER TO BENGAL AND UNITED PROVINCES AND N.W.F.P. ORDINANCES. IN REGARD TO BENGAL IT HAS BEEN AND IS NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO PREVENT DASTARDLY ASSASSINATION OF THEIR OFFICERS AND OF PRIVATE CITIZENS.

HIS EXCELLENCY WISHES ME TO SAY THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT DESIRE TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND WITH ALL SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC AND IN PARTICULAR TO SECURING CO-OPERATION OF ALL IN GREAT WORK OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS WHICH THEY ARE DETERMINED TO PUSH FORWARD WITH MINIMUM

[1] *Vide* p. 459.

DELAY. CO-OPERATION, HOWEVER, MUST BE MUTUAL AND HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT RECONCILE ACTIVITIES OF THE CONGRESS IN UNITED PROVINCES AND N.W.F.P. WITH THE SPIRIT OF FRANK CO-OPERATION WHICH THE GOOD OF INDIA DEMANDS.

AS REGARDS THE UNITED PROVINCES, YOU ARE DOUBTLESS AWARE THAT WHILE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WERE ENGAGED IN DEVISING MEANS TO GIVE ALL POSSIBLE RELIEF IN THE EXISTING SITUATION THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED A NO-RENT CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS NOW BEING VIGOROUSLY PURSUED BY THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATIONS IN THAT PROVINCE. THIS ACTION ON THE PART OF THE CONGRESS BODIES HAS COMPELLED GOVERNMENT TO TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT A GENERAL STATE OF DISORDER AND SPREADING OF CLASS AND COMMUNAL HATRED WHICH THE CAMPAIGN, IF CONTINUED UNCHECKED, WOULD INEVITABLY INVOLVE.

IN THE N.W.F.P., ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN AND BODIES HE CONTROLLED HAVE CONTINUOUSLY ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND IN FOMENTING RACIAL HATRED. HE AND HIS FRIENDS HAVE PERSISTENTLY REFUSED ALL OVERTURES BY THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER TO SECURE THEIR CO-OPERATION AND, REJECTING DECLARATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER, HAVE DECLARED IN FAVOUR OF COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE. ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN HAS DELIVERED NUMEROUS SPEECHES OPEN TO NO OTHER CONSTRUCTION THAN AS INCITEMENT TO REVOLUTION AND HIS ADHERENTS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO STIR TROUBLE IN THE TRIBAL AREAS. THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER, WITH THE APPROVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY'S GOVERNMENT, HAS SHOWN UTMOST FORBEARANCE AND TO THE LAST MOMENT CONTINUED HIS EFFORTS TO SECURE ASSISTANCE OF ABDUL GHAFFAR IN CARRYING INTO EFFECT, WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DELAY, INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN THE PROVINCE. GOVERNMENT REFRAINED FROM TAKING SPECIAL MEASURES UNTIL THE ACTIVITIES OF ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN AND HIS ASSOCIATES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE OPEN AND INTENSIVE PREPARATION FOR AN EARLY CONFLICT WITH GOVERNMENT, CREATED A SITUATION OF SUCH GRAVE MENACE TO PEACE OF THE PROVINCE AND OF THE TRIBAL AREAS AS TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FURTHER TO DELAY ACTION. HIS EXCELLENCY UNDERSTANDS THAT ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN WAS IN AUGUST LAST MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING CONGRESS MOVEMENT IN THE PROVINCE AND THAT THE VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZATIONS HE CONTROL-

LED WERE SPECIFICALLY RECOGNIZED BY ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE AS CONGRESS ORGANIZATIONS. HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PEACE AND ORDER MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO HAVE ANY DEALING WITH PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS UPON WHOM REST THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIVITIES ABOVE OUTLINED. YOU HAVE YOURSELF BEEN ABSENT FROM INDIA ON BUSINESS OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE ATTITUDE WHICH YOU HAVE OBSERVED THERE HIS EXCELLENCY IS UNWILLING TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE PERSONALLY ANY SHARE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OR THAT YOU APPROVE OF THE RECENT ACTIVITIES OF CONGRESS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES AND THE N.W.F.P. IF THIS IS SO, HE IS WILLING TO SEE YOU AND TO GIVE YOU HIS VIEWS AS TO THE WAY IN WHICH YOU CAN BEST EXERT YOUR INFLUENCE TO MAINTAIN THE SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION WHICH ANIMATED THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE. BUT HIS EXCELLENCY FEELS BOUND TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE WILL NOT BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH YOU MEASURES WHICH GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WITH THE FULL APPROVAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO ADOPT IN BENGAL, THE UNITED PROVINCES AND THE N.W.F.P. THESE MEASURES MUST IN ANY CASE BE KEPT IN FORCE UNTIL THEY HAVE SERVED THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY WERE IMPOSED NAMELY PRESERVATION OF LAW AND ORDER ESSENTIAL TO GOOD GOVERNMENT. ON RECEIPT OF YOUR REPLY HIS EXCELLENCY PROPOSES TO PUBLISH THIS CORRESPONDENCE.

India in 1931-32

APPENDIX IV

TELEGRAM FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY[1]

January 2, 1932

HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF YOUR TELEGRAM OF 1ST JANUARY WHICH HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BY HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

THEY MUCH REGRET TO OBSERVE THAT UNDER YOUR ADVICE THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE HAS PASSED A RESOLUTION WHICH INVOLVES GENERAL REVIVAL OF CIVIL DISOBE-

[1] *Vide* pp. 472-6.

DIENCE UNLESS CERTAIN CONDITIONS ARE SATISFIED WHICH ARE STATED IN YOUR TELEGRAM AND THE RESOLUTION.

THEY REGARD THIS ATTITUDE AS THE MORE DEPLORABLE IN VIEW OF THE DECLARED INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO EXPEDITE THE POLICY OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM CONTAINED IN THE PREMIER'S STATEMENT.

NO GOVERNMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY, CAN BE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS SOUGHT TO BE IMPOSED UNDER THE MENACE OF UNLAWFUL ACTION BY ANY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, NOR CAN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACCEPT THE POSITION IMPLIED IN YOUR TELEGRAM THAT THEIR POLICY SHOULD BE DEPENDENT ON THE JUDGMENT OF YOURSELF AS TO NECESSITY OF MEASURES WHICH GOVERNMENT HAVE TAKEN AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL AND THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE FACTS AND AFTER ALL OTHER POSSIBLE REMEDIES HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED.

HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT YOU OR THE WORKING COMMITTEE CONTEMPLATE THAT HIS EXCELLENCY CAN INVITE YOU, WITH THE HOPE OF ANY ADVANTAGE, TO AN INTERVIEW HELD UNDER THE THREAT OF RESUMPTION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

THEY MUST HOLD YOU AND THE CONGRESS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH MAY ENSUE FROM ACTION WHICH THE CONGRESS HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION OF TAKING AND TO MEET WHICH GOVERNMENT TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES.

India in 1931-32; also *Young India*, 7-1-1932

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India in 1931-32: Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta.

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(*The*) *Textile Mercury and Argus*: Periodical published from Manchester; first appeared in March 1931.

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(*The*) *Times*: Morning daily published from London.

(*The*) *Tribune*: English daily published from Ambala.

Yorkshire Post: Morning daily published from Yorkshire.

Young India: English weekly edited by Gandhiji and published from Ahmedabad.

CHRONOLOGY

(*September 12, 1931—January 3, 1932*)

September 12: Gandhiji arrived in London.
In interview to the Press gave essence of Congress mandate.
Spoke at Friends' House, London.

September 13: In broadcast to America from Columbia Broadcasting Service made an appeal to conscience of the people.
Met British Prime Minister and Lord Sankey.

Before *September 14:* In message to *The Times* said that he wanted goodwill of every Englishman and Englishwoman in his mission of peace.

September 14: Attended Federal Structure Committee meeting but did not speak, it being his Silence Day.

September 15: At Federal Structure Committee presented national demand of Complete Independence.

September 16: Speaking at meeting of Labour M. P.s reiterated India's demand for Complete Independence.

September 17: Gave interview to the *Textile Mercury* and *News Chronicle.*
Spoke at Federal Structure Committee on elections of members of Federal Legislature.

September 19: Spoke at Reception at Kingsley Hall.

September 21 : Shifted to 88 Knightsbridge from Kingsley Hall.

September 22: Had interview with Charlie Chaplin.
Spoke at meeting of Federal Structure Committee on Government's decision to abandon Gold Standard.

September 23: Spoke at Guild House Church on "Voluntary Poverty".
Speaking at meeting of M.P.s elucidated idea of Complete Independence.

September 24 : Had discussions with Aga Khan and Jinnah.
Attended Federal Structure Committee meeting.

September 25 : Called on Lord Irwin.

September 26: Had talks with representatives of cotton industry at Edgeworth and at Darwen.
Received deputation of unemployed workers at Springfield Garden Village.

September 26/27: Spoke on Lancashire's unemployment problem.

September 27: Spoke at Adult School, West Bradford.
Received deputations from unemployed workers and Clitheroe Weavers' Association at West Bradford.
Had talks with Press reporters.

September 28 : Attended Minorities Committee meeting.

September 29 : In London. Had discussions with Sir Samuel Hoare.

September 30: Had interview with Prime Minister.
Spoke at reception, Indian Chamber of Commerce, London.

October 1: Had meeting with the Aga Khan and other Muslim Leaders at Ritz Hotel.
Had discussions with Prime Minister.
Speaking at Minorities Committee meeting, asked for its adjournment for a week.

Before *October 2:* Gave interview to the *Jewish Chronicle.*

October 2: Talked to Henry Carter on prohibition.
Independent Labour Party, Indian National Congress, League and the Gandhi Society arranged a birthday luncheon for Gandhiji at Westminster Palace rooms.
At Minorities Conference, London, Gandhiji opposed special representation to Depressed Classes.
Spoke at women's reception arranged by Women's Indian Association at Central Y.M.C.A., London.

October 3 : Went to see C. F. Andrews at Canterbury.

October 4 : At Canterbury.

October 5: Spoke at a meeting of Minorities Conference, London.

October 6: Addressed Fellowship Club.
Attended party in honour of Lord Irwin.

October 7: Spoke at a meeting of Friends of India, London.

October 8: Presented Congress policy on minority question at Minorities Committee meeting.
Spoke at a conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, London.

On or before *October 9:* Gave interviews to Madame Montessori and Shaw Desmond.

October 9: Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting.

October 10: At Chichester.

On or before *October 11:* Gave interview to H. N. Brailsford.

October 12: At National Labour Club said that India was determined to achieve Complete Independence without shedding blood.

October 13: Explained communal question in interview to the Press.
Addressed Indian Students' meeting, Gower Street Hostel, Bloomsbury, London.

On or before *October 14:* Gave interview to Joseph Bard, Editor, *The Island*, London.

October 14: Issued statement to the Press on solution of communal issue.
Had talks with Sir Samuel Hoare, Benthal and M. A. Jinnah.
Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting, London.

October 15: Spoke at meeting of students at International Students' Movement House, Russell Square, London.
Had talks with Samuel Hoare, T. B. Sapru, M. R. Jayakar and others.

October 16: Had discussion with Callender on Mass Production *v.* Production by the Masses.
Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting and at Temperance Workers' meeting.

October 17: Spoke at Nottingham University College, Nottingham.

On or after *October 17:* Gave interview to E. Wrench, Editor, *The Spectator*, London.

October 18: Spoke to Indians at Selly Oak, Birmingham, and exhorted them to return to India and serve their countrymen.
Spoke at Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham on India's decision to attain freedom through peaceful means.

October 19: Left Birmingham in the morning.

October 20: Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting, London.

At meeting held under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, London, spoke on "India of Today and Tomorrow".

October 21 : Called on Lord Irwin and Col. Maddock. Attended Federal Structure Committee meeting.

October 22: Gave interview to *The Statesmen*.
Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting, London.

October 23: Gave interview to Reuter.
Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting, London.
Had a talk with T. B. Sapru and others. Reached Eton at night.
Addressed a gathering of School Boys, Eton.
Left Eton in the morning for Oxford.

October 24: Spoke at meeting of Indian Majlis, Oxford.
Delivered a talk at Oxford.

October 26 : Attended Federal Structure Committee meeting.

October 27 : Attended Federal Structure Committee meeting.

October 28 : Spoke on child education at Montessori Training College, London.

October 29: Gave interview to Charles Petrasch and others.

October 30: Spoke at a meeting of Commonwealth of India League, Central Hall, Westminster.

October 31 : Spoke at meeting of Quakers at Friend's House, London.

November 1: Spoke at Pembroke College, Cambridge, reiterating his faith in a partnership of India and Britain on equal terms.
Spoke at Indian Majlis.
Reached London.

November 2: Submitted written statement at Federal Structure Committee, London.

November 3 : Spoke at the annual meeting of Children's House, Bow.

November 4: Spoke at Federal Structure Committee meeting, London.
Spoke at the Indian Medical Association.

November 5 : Spoke at meeting of Postal Workers' Union.

November 6: Mr. & Mrs. George Bernard Shaw called on Gandhiji.

November 7: Gandhiji reached Oxford. Had talks with Ramsay MacDonald and Prof. Murray.

November 9: Returned to London from Oxford.
Declared in Press statement that he had cancelled his continental engagements.
Spoke at meeting, organized by Fellowship of Reconciliation at Friends' House, London.

November 10: Had talks with T. B. Sapru and others.
Discussed with J. M. Sen Gupta situation in Bengal. Spoke at London School of Economics.

November 11: Gave interview to the Press.
Explained his concept of Provincial autonomy at conference of the Round Table Conference delegates.

November 12: Spoke at Commonwealth of India League, London.

November 13: Gave interview to *News Chronicle.*
Spoke at Minorities Committee meeting.
Spoke at Westminster School.

November 14: Called on Lord Irwin.
Gave interview to the Press.

November 16: Attended Minorities Committee meeting.

November 17: Sent a message to F. B. Fisher expressing his inability to visit America.
Spoke on defence at the Federal Structure Committee meeting.

November 18: Spoke at meeting of Women's Indian Council at Morley College, London.

November 19: Spoke on "Commercial Discrimination" at Federal Structure Committee meeting.
Addressed London Vegetarian Society.

November 20: Attended Vegetarians' meeting.

November 24: Had discussions with Prime Minister, Lord Sankey, State Secretary, Sapru and Lees-Smith.

November 25: Gave interview to *New Leader.* Made two speeches on "Provincial Autonomy" and on "Finance" in Federal Structure Committee meetings.
Met Dr. Ambedkar in the evening.

November 26: Participated in proceedings of Federal Structure Committee meeting.

November 27: Participated in Federal Structure Committee meeting.

November 28: Took part in proceedings of plenary session of Round Table Conference.

Before *November 30:* Gave interview to the Press, London.

November 30: Participated in proceedings of plenary session of R.T.C.

December 1: Delivered concluding speech at plenary session of Round Table Conference.
Gave interview to journalists.
Released statement to the Press on events in India.

December 2: Gave interview to Sir Philip Hartog.

December 3: Gave interview to the Press.
Had discussions with J. F. Horrabin, Wrench, Laski, Kingsley Martin, Brailsford and Nevinson.

December 4: Called on Prime Minister and Secretary of State for India.

Before *December 5:* Gave interview to Edmond Demeter.
Issued parting manifesto.

December 5: Gave farewell messages to Reuter and *Bristol Evening News*.
Left Britain for Paris *en route* to India.
Spoke at reception organized by Indians in Paris.
Spoke at public meeting in afternoon.

December 6: Had discussions with Romain Rolland at Villeneuve.
Gave interview to the Press.

December 8: Addressed three meetings at Lausanne.

December 9: Had discussions with Romain Rolland in Villeneuve.

December 10: Spoke at meeting held at Victoria Hall organized by International Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

December 10–11: Had discussions with Romain Rolland.

December 11: Left Villeneuve. In Milan.

December 12: In Rome. Visited Vatican city. Called on Mussolini.

December 13: In Rome. Had talk with Sukhotina Tolstoy.
Addressed a women's meeting.

)ecember 14: In Brindisi. Attended function organized by History and Art Society.

)ecember 17: Gave interview to Reuter at Port Said.

)ecember 24: Made statement to the Associated Press of India.

)ecember 25: Delivered a talk on Jesus and Christianity on s. s. *Pilsna* at 4.30 in the morning.

)ecember 27: Gave interview to Reuter on s.s. *Pilsna.*

)ecember 28: Landed in Bombay in the morning.
Gave interview to the Press.
Spoke at public meeting at Azad Maidan, Bombay.
At night spoke at Welfare of India League in Majestic Hotel, Bombay.

'ecember 29: Wired to the Viceroy seeking interview to discuss Frontier, U.P. and Bengal Ordinances.
Had talks with Subhas Chandra Bose.

'ecember 31: Viceroy declined to discuss with Gandhiji Frontier, U.P. and Bengal Ordinances.

1932

inuary 1: Resolution of the Congress Working Committee, drafted by Gandhiji, calling upon the nation to resume civil disobedience was adopted.
Gandhiji sent rejoinder to the Government that if the Viceroy refused to discuss with him the Frontier, U.P. and Bengal Ordinances, the nation will resort to civil disobedience.
Gandhi-Willingdon correspondence was released.

inuary 2: Gandhiji was interviewed by the Associated Press on the revival of civil disobedience.
Had talks with the deputation of Welfare of India League.
Viceroy rejected Gandhiji's request for an interview.

anuary 3: Gandhiji wired to the Government regretting Government's decision and assuring a non-violent struggle.
Sent messages to America and to Indian Christians.
In an interview to the Associated Press of India emphasized the need for resuming civil disobedience.
In an interview to *The Bombay Chronicle* outlined the plan of action to be followed by the nation after his arrest.
Spoke on the 'utility of prayer'.

INDEX

CORRIGENDUM

Item 49 (p. 71) is to be omitted. (The correct date is September 27, 1939.)

ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
43 Item 23, para 3, line 7	it means,	it means it,
141 Para 5, line 2	they d	they did not
159 Para 2, line 9	the situation	in the situation
186 Line 4 from bottom	life	live
205 Para 3, line 2	by the members	like the members
236 Footnote 3, line 3	p. 241.	p. 240.
299 Item 206, para 2, line 14	manifest	manifestly
331 Footnote, line 4	Randolph Churchill. On November 22	Randolph Churchill on November 22.
342 Item 226, para 2, line 2	was reserved subject,	was a reserved subject,
380 Item 242, para 1, line 4	Common	Commons
396 Line 23	expect	except
410 Para 2, lines 10 and 11	equilibrium	equivalent
422 Item 264, para 2, line 4	iron	irons
432 Footnote	date "Diary	date in "Diary